



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600069974+

THE
LAST DAYS OF A BACHELOR.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

By JAMES McGRIGOR ALLAN,

Author of "THE COST OF A CORONET," "THE INTELLECTUAL SEVERANCE OF MEN
AND WOMEN," "YOUNG LADYISM," "GRINS AND WRINKLES,"
&c., &c., &c.

"L'on revient toujours à ses premières amours."

French Proverb.

London:

T. CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,
30, WELBECK STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE.
1862.

[*The Right of Translation is Reserved*].

250. h. 106.



TO
ALL MY OLD FRIENDS;
BUT MORE ESPECIALLY TO THOSE WHO
STILL REMEMBER ME IN
CANADA, NEW BRUNSWICK, AND NOVA SCOTIA.

CONTENTS OF VOL I.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. Left for Execution	5
II. The Confirmed Bachelors	17
III. The Poetry of Evening Parties	31
IV. The Polka... ..	44
V. How I ceased to be a Muff	55
VI. Open Confession is Good for the Soul	65
VII. The Secret of Ingratiating Oneself with the Ladies..	73
VIII. Precept not always reducible to Practice	82
IX. Making a Man of me	92
X. Poetical Justice	104
XI. Laura	113
XII. The First Stroke of Fate	124
XIII. The Second Stroke of Fate	135
XIV. The Third Stroke of Fate	147
XV. New York	159
XVI. A New York Boarding House	177
XVII. Hester—The Kaatskills—Visit the First—Sun-rise ...	196
XVIII. Undine	215
XIX. The Ideal	229
XX. The Kaatskills—Visit the Second—Sun-set ...	45
XXI. Lucy	262
XXII. The Old Man of the Sea	278

THE LAST DAYS OF A BACHELOR.

CHAPTER I.

LEFT FOR EXECUTION.

“ And I could weep, the Oneida Chief,
His descant wildly thus begun;
But that I may not stain with grief,
The death-song of my father's son.”

MOORE.

BRIGHTON, July 18th, 1859.

I am a doomed man !

My fate is to be sealed in autumn. As it is now mid-summer, I calculate I have about three more months to live. I have retired,

therefore, to this watering-place, to commune with my own heart, and to spend the last days of my existence in solitude.

The reader then will see, that the term "Left for Execution," as applied to my present position, is used in a metaphorical sense. I am not literally in the condemned cell. I am not personally confined, although morally, I am tied by the leg. I am on my *parole*, bound to appear this day three months' hence. I am not doomed to perish by an ignominious death: neither am I the victim of a lingering disease; nor do I intend to take poison at the end of the period I have named. I have no reason to believe that my actual material existence will terminate, although I know my personal freedom, and most probably my *imaginative* and *intellectual* life *will*! I have not the slightest intention of committing self-destruction to avert my impending fate. Unless in this brief period the agony of contending feelings thoroughly undermines a naturally strong constitution, I have no reason

to doubt that I shall survive the trying ordeal, and endure for—further suffering.

Three months hence, if the world does not come to an end in the interval, or unless any other (I cannot with Dr. Cumming's vaticinations before me, say *unexpected* or *unforeseen*) event occurs to avert my doom—I, Lothario Lovemall, commonly supposed by my friends, and until lately by myself, to be of sound mind, and to all intents and purposes, a rational and responsible being, will perform the principal part in a pageant got up expressly to enable me to renounce all right and title to my own future self-government, and to consign myself to a way of life thoroughly subversive of all my previous habits, tastes, pursuits, pleasures, friendships, and general existence—which will, in short, destroy my entity—as a bachelor.

Three months hence, I shall be made, in the derisive jargon of the world "the happiest," in reality "the most wretched of men." From

the happiest day of my life I shall date the beginning of a career of woe!

Three months hence I am to be—
MARRIED!!!

• • • • •

What prompts men on the eve of death, or marriage, or any other great calamity, to desire to unbosom their minds, to address the world they are about to leave? Why do they live their whole past lives over again; crowd within the compass of a few fleeting moments, large volumes from the immense library of memory? Why are such recollections so vivid? Why does the past become beautiful and enchanting, exactly in proportion as the future appears cheerless and void, appalling and desperate? Why are there last dying confessions? Why does the inspiration of the prophet become most clear as he approaches his final hour? Why are

the last words of every one, even the most commonplace individual, invested with a solemn interest never accorded to them in their day of health? Let Psychologists explain the cause—I only know such is the fact.

INTERESTING TO SPIRITUALISTS.

“What black magician conjures up this fiend?”

For what I am now about to relate, the reader will account according to his or her peculiar idiosyncrasy. To make use of a favourite expression with Josephus whenever he relates a miraculous occurrence, “But as to these events, let every one determine as he pleases.” One night, such was the utter depression of my spirits, the complete state of mental collapse, brought on by thoughts of my approaching doom, and the utter despair of

any hope of reprieve; that I retired to bed at the early hour of *nine*! As I lay restless and tossing on my couch, the following singular vision gradually shaped itself:—On a pile of folio volumes in the centre of the room, sat a little man, whom I was first tempted to address as “Mephistophiles,” the nick-name by which I recognize my most intimate friend, Professor Zimmerman, of the Mythological Society. The personage was dressed exactly as Mephistophiles is represented on the stage; and it was this striking resemblance, not merely in dress, but in every other respect, and the reflection that my friend Zimmerman could not be in two places at once “like a bird;” and that as I had heard from him that morning from London, it was not likely that he could, without previous warning, have abandoned his arduous avocations in the metropolis to pay me a visit in that fantastical costume, which made me refrain from addressing—the individual, whom I must call—without the slightest intention of being im-

lite, but merely from a love of truth—*The Demon!*

I am positive I was not dreaming. So peculiarly “wide-awake” was I, that I distinctly recognised among the pile of *very heavy books!* on which *The Demon* was sitting, the works of Dupper, Humming, Sturgeon, and others whom it would be tedious to name. The Demon appeared to be amusing himself by tracing certain characters on a blank page in one of the volumes which, if I do not mistake, was the last great work of Dr. Humming, proving that our unfortunate globe cannot exist much longer. I remarked particularly that he used no pen, but wrote with the long nail of his fore-finger, which was nibbed like a pen.

On seeing that he had attracted my attention, he looked up and said, abruptly, “Why are you so miserable?” Emboldened by despair, I answered without hesitation, “Because I am going to be married.” The demon chuckled audibly, and then held up to my ob-

servation the folio, on which I beheld, written in large *red* letters, these words :

“ THE LAST DAYS OF A BACHELOR.”

These words the demon spelt out loud, in tones clear and piercing, like the high notes of a violin. When I looked again he had vanished.

Night after night was this strange scene repeated, with little or no variation. Night after night did the Demon appear, seated on his pile of books, and write the same strange title on a fly-leaf of one of the works either of Dupper, Sturgeon, or Humming ; and perhaps the most singular part of the story, is, that, the evidence of the nocturnal visit always remained in the actual leaf, with the letters above-named, clearly written in a fair legible hand, in some *red fluid*.

One night I took courage and questioned him. “ Demon, what would you have me do ?” He replied as follows, “ Time is passing rapidly ; only three months yet remain to you

before the awful ceremony." And again he held up the page with the large blood-red capitals,

"THE LAST DAYS OF A BACHELOR."

A sudden thought darted into my brain, like an electric shock. "You wish me to write, under this title, my actual convictions and experiences, now that I stand on the table-land, between two kinds of life, utterly antagonistic; to contrast the bright past, with the hopeless future, to wrestle with my fate, to draw inspiration from the very depths of despair, to convert my misfortune into profit, to enlist the sympathies of the world, to rise like a phoenix from my ashes, to distil the essence of my being into the printed page, and while as an individual, *I die*, to live for ever in the mouths of men; in a word, to warn, guide, counsel, instruct, and *govern from the grave!*"

With a loud "Ho, ho" of triumphant and infernal merriment, which showed that I had at length divined his purpose in haunting me so long, *The Demon* vanished, and I found

myself in my nightgown and slippers, seated at a table, writing; under my hand lay the fatal leaf, with the title already traced, and in the inspiration of the moment fast flowed the letters from my pen.

But how is this? am I bewitched? I am writing in *letters of blood*! Yes, there is no mistake, I dip my pen into the ink-bottle, and the characters are not black, but *red*! For a moment I am stupified with horror; gradually the true secret of the apparent phenomenon dawns upon me; the explanation is, as in many similar instances, singularly simple. By mistake, I have been dipping my pen into a bottle of red ink!

I know that I here afford a loop-hole to "infidel scorers," to say that the supernatural element wholly disappears from my story, that the apparition of the Demon was only a dream, the offspring of mental agitation, that I am a somnambulist, and that the fly-leaves with the titles and letters of blood, were in reality, written by myself, (in a semi-conscious

state, when brooding over one idea,) IN RED INK.

The only reply which I shall condescend to make to these impostors, is to quote the polite language of the Rev. Mr. Kingsley, as applied by him to any of his critics, who shall assert that his works convey internal evidence of heterodoxy—

“*Mentiris, impudentissime.*”

In the words of Rabelais: “Though you believe it not, I care not much; but an honest man, and of good judgment, believeth still what is told him, and that which he finds written.”

And I shall further relieve my mind, by copying the example of the Pope, by uttering this ‘*my little allocution*,’ and cursing, anathematizing, and excommunicating all who dare to assert anything contrary to the supernatural view of my story; and moreover, I shall call on all sensible, moral, and well disposed readers, to lament with me, on the melancholy decay of faith, characteristic of this age,

when books, like the "Essays and Reviews," are written by clergymen, and when men can be found sufficiently wicked, malicious, and impious to doubt the veracity of *my statements*. And I shall further insinuate, that in addition to the proof which such men give, that they are materialists, and infidels, and blind, and fools, and incapable of discerning truth; that they are also bad, carnal-minded, immoral men, and lead dishonest lives, and are, in short, thoroughly given over to the devices of their own hearts; and as a well meaning man, I shall venture to regret that we live in a degenerate age, where we cannot have recourse to that much shorter method with a deist, which was practised in "the good old times," namely, the argument of the stake and the faggot. "Inshallah, Mashallah, a stake is a strong argument."

CHAPTER II.

"THE CONFIRMED BACHELORS."

"For who to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being ere resigned,
Left the warm precincts of delightful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind."

GRAY.

THE Demon returned no more, and the resolution so strangely inspired, was strengthened and fortified by calm reflection. The result is, that in obedience to that strong prompting of our familiar spirit! which leads every individual, as far as possible, to shun oblivion, and seek sympathy, to strive after that short-lived, posthumous fame, which we vainly call immortality! to preserve our

memories a little time after our disappearance from the scene, I now pen the following pages. Like the Dying Poet of Lamartine,

"I'll sing, since o'er the Lyre my hand is flung,
I'll sing, and like the dying swan prolong
Beyond the grave, the last melodious lay."

I propose filling up the time between the present moment and my execution—I mean my marriage, by writing reminiscences, records, reflections, reveries, ravings,—call them what you will, to be published after I am—MARRIED! to all intents and purposes a posthumous work.

No literary vanity urges me to this. My identity will be concealed under the pseudonym by which I have already introduced myself to the reader. Even should my physical existence survive the catastrophe, I shall be a mere unit among the herd of—married men. My nobler being, as doer, thinker, *bachelor* will be merged in martyrdom—I mean marriage. No one will recognize in the subdued husband, conveying his wife to the Opera,

or abjectly sipping his port at the club, him who was the once gay, happy, careless, jovial Lothario Lovemall. *Quantum mutatus ab illo!*

Shall I dare to confess the authorship? Reader, if you be a married man, that question is superfluous! Here then, is strong presumptive evidence of the integrity of my motives. It is gratifying to anticipate the immense circulation of this work, and consequently the amount of sympathy which will be lavished on my sufferings, although I may never demand that sympathy *in propria persona*. As a philanthropist, only inferior to Howard, it is a solace to think that these pages may be useful in warning others off those rocks and quicksands, on which my happiness has been too fatally wrecked.

Let me here take the opportunity of apologising for any abruptness or want of regular sequence in the arrangement of these outpourings of the heart, which the reader will kindly bear in mind, are penned at intervals, and

under extreme depression of spirits. Pardon me then, gentle reader, when I am 'desultory, abrupt and rhapsodical. Remember that when my page is lively, it hides an aching heart; that when it is sad, when in the classic language of Cousin Jonathan, I am "piling up the agony," it is but a reflection of the narrator's agony, which may be piled too high for endurance.

Let me at least in the outset, make an effort to be methodical. In order to understand why I display this deeply-rooted aversion to matrimony, it is necessary to communicate the following personal information:

Briefly then, I am the cadet of an old county-family, in which two principles or articles of faith were deeply implanted. The one was that our progenitors had come over with William the Conqueror! The other that, as their descendants, the representatives of the family had *always*, that is, for a matter of eight hundred years, lived at the expense of the nation, it would be an unheard-of dis-

grace should such an honorable custom fall into desuetude.

To a certain extent, I agreed with my family when they recommended this traditional policy. We did not differ materially in our definition of a gentleman, viz., one who sleeps on down, eats, drinks, and wears the best at the expense of others, spends the money earned by others, and does nothing for his own support. Only we differed materially as to the best method of attaining to the *dolce far niente*! When therefore my family pointed out to me that their interest lay chiefly in the church and the diplomatic service, I replied that I doubted seriously if either of these professions offered the proper field for the display of my peculiar abilities, and the gratification of my peculiar tastes. Besides, there was *some* work to be done in each of these callings, *some* duties, which could not be conveniently shirked, shelved, or omitted.

I wished to be entirely my own master. My mind was singularly free from the trammels

of vulgar prejudice and conventional ideas. Liberty, complete liberty, was what I pined for. To work, except when I chose, where I chose, and as short or long, much or little as I chose, appeared to me then (and now) an intolerable hardship, interfering not only with the metaphysical freedom of the will, but also with the liberty of the subject, which is the proudest boast of Britons. The necessity of labour to a gentleman I looked upon as a social evil to which the late Sir Peter Laurie would have done well to turn his attention and "*put down.*"

At this period of my life—the interesting age of twenty-one, three tastes had declared themselves in a very decided manner. A taste for art, for literature, and for falling in love with agreeable and accomplished women. Music I liked, without being a connoisseur. Save for the fact that I really do understand pictures, I might have taken as my motto the saying of some witty Frenchman, "There are three things I have always loved without

in the least understanding :—painting, music, and women !”

After mature reflection, I communicated to the representative of my family my *ultimatum*. I said that as the allowance made me by my grandmother was amply sufficient to support me like a gentleman, and my expectations at her death, removed all fear of penury, I had concluded not to dull my natural abilities, or damp the exuberant ardour of my youthful aspirations by pursuing any of the stereotyped beaten paths to sordid honours—that I intended to devote myself to seeing the world, to going into society, of which I felt qualified to become an ornament—to prosecuting my three tastes for art, literature, and falling in love,—to be in short a “*gentleman of elegant leisure*.” I was going on to say that I thought I should go to Paris, when the representative of my family closed the interview abruptly, by telling me “I might go to ——” well, never mind where !

I will not gratify the curiosity of my readers

farther than to observe that although people frequently and urgently request others to go to this *place*, I never yet discovered any alacrity on the part of any one to comply with the request. In short, it seems a place that no one wishes to go to, and no one individually thinks of paying it a visit, although possessed with the fixed idea that his friends, acquaintance, relations, and the great bulk of mankind are certain to go there.

Time was when I could, without any inconsistency, laugh at Benedicts. I belonged to a club called "The Confirmed Bachelors." *

* The real name of this club we have learnt. It is, "The Society for the Suppression of Matrimony." The name sufficiently indicates the object and motives of the men, or rather *fends incarnate*, who have originated this fraternity. Lady readers will have some difficulty in crediting that in the nineteenth century, and in a country deservedly famed as pre-eminent in civilization, such a society could exist, and establish its propaganda in London. But truth is stranger than fiction. We have heard it reported that many letters have been addressed to the Secretary of State for Home affairs, praying him to abolish this fraternity. But such are the truly liberal principles of the British Constitution, that Government abstains from exerting its authority, even when it would be backed by public opinion.

The reply made by the Secretary to these addresses has been virtually similar to that made by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury to the clergy, who requested that the authors of the 'Essays and Reviews' might be prosecuted, viz., that it would be better to refute the principles of these misguided men than to put them down

I was the merriest, and apparently the most confirmed among them. But, alas! as Othello says, "Who can control his fate." All the members looked upon me with pride as one of the staunchest supporters of the order—as one

by the strong hand of authority. In the wisdom of this I cordially agree, and it is to bring about such a desirable result in this case that I now draw the public attention to this society. Every member is initiated by an oath and an ordeal, to which the most excruciating ceremonies of the *Fehm Gericht*, or secret societies of the middle ages, and those of the modern Free-Masons, are puerile and insignificant.

It is effectually a club of Misogamists and Misogynists, who are bound to discourage and discountenance marriage and female influence, both by precept and example in every possible way. However we may condemn and abhor the principles of these unfortunate men, we are bound in justice not to misrepresent them. This society does not advocate immorality *directly*, though it is easy to see that their principles tend to the overthrow of society. They neither approve of polygamy, nor communism in women. They believe that there are already too many people in the world, and in the papers periodically delivered by members, celibacy is vaunted as the highest earthly blessing and virtue.

Although by their constitution they are pledged to accept as brethren all who are misogamists, they discriminate between men of pleasure, who embrace a life of celibacy from unworthy motives, and philosophers who are actuated by a sincere conviction that such is the most perfect condition of mankind. Their patron saint is Paul, and they buckler their opinions by extracts from the Jewish Scriptures, the writings of the Fathers, the ordinances of the Roman Church, and a great number of ancient and modern authors, of whom Euripides, Juvenal, and Malthus are the principal.

The above is a faint outline of what we have collected respecting this singular society. Our author, Mr. Lovemall, as a sworn member of the fraternity, was, of course, obliged to write circumspectly. From his playful manner of treating the subject, many readers may consider it a joke.

PRINTER'S DEVIL.

of the chief bulwarks of the cause. So popular was I, that I knew that in the course of time I might even aspire to the highest honors of the fraternity. Yes, I might one day hope to become "The Most Noble Grand Master and Perpetual President" of a society which had representatives in every land, savage and civilized; in every parallel of latitude in which humanity can exist; from the frozen shores of Greenland to the scorched climes of the equator; in the courts of Kings, and the huts of canibals, who beat their mothers and court their wives practically with clubs; whose missionaries have penetrated to the wilds of Africa, in order, if possible, to make a convert of a family older than our oldest houses—the *Gorilla*! and dispute pre-eminence with these renowned explorers, Dr. Livingstone, Gordon Cumming, and De Chai llu.

Oh, my beloved companions—though no longer privileged to be with you in person—I yearn towards you in spirit! My oath compels me to be silent, even when I hear your

solemn mysteries, and your sublime objects made the subject of sneers and contumely, by the ignorant and prejudiced vulgar.* Alas were it otherwise, it would ill become me to be your laureate. I, a recreant and renegade deserve not that privilege.

Never can depart the memory of that mournful evening when I gave in my resignation. The subject would make a com-

* Nothing is more true than that the great characteristic of the age is the decay of faith, and an attitude of most irreverent scepticism towards that which is constituted and established. We have heard many people openly deride the Mysteries of Freemasonry. The celebrated De Quincy wrote of it as follows:—"A man must be a poor creature who cannot invent a hoax. For two centuries we have had a first rate one, and its name is *Freemasonry*. Do you know the secret, my reader, or shall I tell you? Lend me a consideration, and I will. But stay, the weather being so fine, and philosophers, therefore, so good tempered, I'll tell it you for nothing; whereas, if you become a mason, you must pay for it. Here is the secret. When the novice is introduced into the conclave of the Freemasons, the grand-master looks very fierce at him, and draws his sword, which makes the novice look very melancholy, as he is not aware of having had time as yet for any profaneness, and fancies, therefore, that somebody must have been slandering him. Then the grand-master, or his deputy, cites him to the bar, saying, 'What's *that* you have in your pocket?' To which the novice replies, 'A guinea.' 'Anything more?' 'Another guinea.' 'Then,' replies the official person, in a voice of thunder, 'fork out.' Of course, to a man coming sword-in-hand, few people refuse to do *that*. This forms the first half of the mysteries; the second half, which is by much the most interesting, consists entirely of brandy. In fact, this latter mystery forms the reason, or final cause, for the elder mystery of the *forking out*."

panion picture to that of Regulus leaving Rome for Carthage. My most intimate friend, Professor Zimmerman, who was about to read a very interesting paper "On the minor miseries of bachelors, contrasted with the serious responsibilities, and arduous duties of married men," burst into tears, and was too agitated to proceed. The business of the evening was suspended, and after the President had formally accepted my resignation, each member wrung my hand; most in solemn silence; they dared not trust themselves to speak. Some of the younger members, too recently introduced, to be weaned from the erroneous prejudices of the outer world, did make shift to wish me "joy," in a voice husky with emotion. Well did I know the one sentiment pervading the hearts of all that vast and honourable assemblage. Though not expressed in words, it amounted to this: "Love-mall is not proof against the insidious infatuation. Our worthiest and most hopeful brother is going to make a fool of himself.

who could have expected it of *him*." The countenances of many expressed perturbation, which I could also construe into language thus, "Lovemall, the wily and courageous, has fallen. Who shall now be safe?" One would have imagined I had been going to *instant* execution.

Such were the bright prospects, the glorious career, the dazzling destiny, which in a rash moment I threw away for ever when I popped the question to Penelope Paragon.

Such, as history shews, is the terrible, the ruinous influence of women. Sampson was betrayed by Delilah; Antony lost the world for Cleopatra; and I, Lothario Lovemall, might have been Most Noble Grand Master, and Perpetual President of the Confirmed Bachelors—

Sorrow bewilders. I repeat myself. I feel that I grow too sad. I am piling the agony too high. It is of no use to think of the future. No hope, no escape, no reprieve! "That way madness lies." Let me think of the past. Oh! the bright, the glorious past. Standing now

upon the brink of matrimony ; about to disappear from the scene at the premature age of thirty ! to drop into the obscure abyss of married life, to be no longer Lovemall the bachelor, but Lovemall the married man, the husband, the father, and the fogley ! how beautiful is the vista of life on which I turn a longing, lingering, backward gaze.

Even sad recollections, robed in the strange, mysterious chastening influence of *time*, appear to soothe and solace. Memory : I solemnly surrender myself to thee, and invoke thy seductive, enchanting aid to recall the poetry and romance of the past.

* * * *

—Away with this pen, and with it, for the present, all sorrowful reminiscences. Let me make amends to thee, gentle reader, for this sadness *in limine* by the contrast of a joyful note.

“ Away, away, strike either chords,
We will not think of themes like these ! ”

CHAPTER III.

THE POETRY OF EVENING PARTIES.

"The heart bowed down with weight of woe,
May still some pleasure own;
For memory is the only friend,
That grief can call her own."

BOHEMIAN GIRL.

PROPERLY to appreciate the Poetry of Evening Parties, you must be neither old bachelor, old maid, paterfamilias, mamma, nor chaperon; you must be either a young gentleman, or young lady. To distinguish the poetry of evening parties, though the masculine medium of a bachelor, requires the following conditions:—Older he must not be than seven-and-twenty. This is the utmost limit, after which in this extremely fast age a man's illusions

fade rapidly. He must possess a moderate independence. Wealthy, or an elder son he must not be, for then he becomes an object of pursuit, and most probably falls a victim to some one or other of those mighty men-hunters, those modern Nimrods represented by marriageable misses, match-making mammas, and widows, in the secondary stage of grief, seeking some solace for their sorrow. If good-looking, clever, accomplished, and standing some six feet—without his boots, so much the better.

Gentle reader, do you fulfil these conditions? You do! Then, I, Lothario Lovemall, figuratively offer you the right hand of fellowship, and execute the masonic grip by which I recognise your right to be greeted, as general admirer and brother coxcomb. *Arcades Ambo!*

Let me here explain the origin of this pseudonym. In the club of Confirmed Bachelors, of which I *was* a member, it is customary for every individual, on taking the oath, to adopt

a name by which he is known to his brethren, for the future. A similar custom, I believe, obtains in monasteries and in many other institutions, which are to our honourable and ancient fraternity, but as the mushroom to the oak. It is symbolical of the fact, that the neophyte has entered a thoroughly new life, and has become another man, that among his brethren he is no longer known by the name which he bore to the outer world. Among the Confirmed Bachelors, each member was known by a name characteristic of some strongly developed peculiarity. My name, "Lothario Lovemall,"* is tolerably suggestive of a tendency at which I have already hinted, at falling in love.

It is not my fault, nor do I indeed consider it as my misfortune, if nature has given me a large and susceptible heart, and if consequently, my life has alway been, in one sense, a continued series of experiments, to find one

* Further on, Mr. Lovemall gives us his real name—or that which does duty for his real name—Richard Rollingstone.

woman worthy of concentrating the full and gushing tide of those emotions, seeking, in every direction, channels of escape.

If any man under the above circumstances be not a coxcomb and general admirer, I very much fear that he will have to be ranged either under the genus, "*muff*," or else rank still lower in the social scale, as one of those coarse-minded individuals, who prefer 'the turf,' the prize-ring, rat-killing, billiards, brandy and water, &c., &c., &c., to song, dance, music, siren-tones, and all the bewitching blandishments of good female society.

It is true that weak-minded and malicious men will endeavour to depreciate you, that they will stigmatise you as "an arrant flirt," "a would-be lady-killer," "a vain coxcomb," "a conceited puppy," "a heartless trifler with female affection," "a gallant gay Lothario," and many similar terms of malignant and ribald reproach. It may be a consolation to you that Lothario Lovemall has been so reproached and has survived it. Be philosophical, my

brother coxcombs, and remember the text—
 “Woe unto you, when all men speak well of
 you.”

To divide my subject methodically; there
 is the pleasure of anticipating, the pleasure of
 dressing for, the pleasure of actually assisting
 at, and the pleasure of remembering—
 evening parties. All these phases of fruition
 collectively constitute “*The Poetry of Evening
 Parties.*”

ANTICIPATION.

Form the day when you open a long, nar-
 row, scented, gilt-edged note, and read therein,
 “Mrs. Harpooner, May Fair, presents her com-
 pliments to Mr. Lothario Lovemall, and will
 be at home on the 21st June. *A dancing tea!*”
 It is thine, O happy wight, to revel in the bliss
 of anticipating, for full three weeks, the plea-
 sure of meeting many handsome girls; amongst
 others, the Misses Angler, Blythe, Diaper,

Dimity, the charming widow Fugleman, Miss Garrison, the three Misses Gallop, Hon. Mrs. Harpooner and daughters, Mrs. Hawker, Huntman, Harrowman, Holdfast, Hooker, with their respective families; The Hon. Mrs. Japan and Lacquer, the Misses Mumford, Lady Maunder, Mrs. Mansbane and daughter, the three Misses Mangleman, Misses Moth, Muslin, Millman, Mohair, Moppet, and Markman, the Nimrods, (a very old county family,) the Misses Ogleman, Miss Phoenix, the Misses Papier Maché, Peacock, Priceman, and Pinchbeck, and though last, not least, these well-known Queens of Fashion, the Marchioness of Ormolu, the Countesses De Toilette and Frangipani, Ladies Veneer and Porcelaine.

I could give you a list as long as that of the ships in Homer's Iliad, but I desist. Perhaps among all these, there may be at least one, if not more, whom you like a little better than yourself, or to speak more correctly, a little better than your club, your

favourite horse, or dog, &c. The pleasures of anticipation are greater at this stage, than if you were more seriously smitten. The lady's image is not stereotyped in your heart; it is only one of a pretty large assortment of *dissolving views*. Love is now merely a sentiment, *therefore* you are happy. You play with the tormentor, and master him. Beware of love, when it becomes a *passion*, then it plays with, masters, and martyrizs you!

THE TOILET.

The important day being at length arrived, muffs and coarse-minded men will probably sneer at you for spending three hours, at the very least, at your toilet. *Encore*, my brother coxcomb, let us treat such misguided people and their opinions with the silent and withering contempt, which they deserve! Remember there is a sublime absence of selfishness

in this devotion. You dress to please others, and who are they you dress to please? *Beautiful Women!* who, at the very same time, are similarly occupied in order to please —*you!* We, my friend, know that women love coxcombs. The impersonation of neatness themselves, they naturally, and as a matter of course, love men who are like them in this respect. Find me one woman who has felt love for a sloven, even though a superior man! Moreover, do you consider it nothing to have the privilege of entering a ball-room, to look at every man, superciliously, even though a Darwin or an Owen, if he wears a badly-tied cravat, or an ill-fitting vest.

As a *Man*, a BRITON, a COXCOMB, how is it possible to exaggerate the importance of the toilet. 'Tis a theme for a Poet! How do justice without the aid of rythm, and numbers to those rites which precede the actual process of arraying yourself in evening apparel, the tepid bath, the leisurely lavations of face and hands, the deliberate shave; but

stay, my brother coxcomb, I hope you do not shave; I hope you join with me, in saying to those fools, who still yield to insular prejudice on this point, and daily rasp their poor unfortunate chins with a keen-edged instrument.—
“ Procul este profani.”

Imagine all the preliminaries achieved; now you cast a calmly confident, it may be—a mildly triumphant glance on the various articles of evening costume; the modern panoply in which you are to conquer, or at least, succumb, with honour, fairly vanquished by some fair foe, some winsome warrior, in the lists of glory—*id est*—the ball-room! And now you begin to arm. Oh, the delicious dallying with the spotless *chemise*, as you cover your manly breast with the starched linen hauberk, powerless, alas, to resist the shafts of beauty's glance. Now you encase your lower limbs in the “continuations,” and so substitute for that exceedingly simple and light summer costume of buff, which we all inherit from Adam, a full-dress evening suit of the nineteenth

century, and complete the marked transformation from a mere *homo*, physiologically speaking, "a biped without feathers, and with flattened nails," into a civilized man, a clothes-wearing animal, glorying in all-rounders, a white choaker, patent-leather boots, and black broad-cloth, a costume something between a waiter's and an undertaker's.

THE BALL.

You have arrived ; you have fought your way up-stairs. You have exchanged London streets, with their strange medley of joy and sorrow, for rooms full of light and life and beauty. You are one among the moving brilliant crowd, in which you are expected to play your part ; but before becoming an actor, be simply a spectator.

Do you not now perceive, my brother Coxcomb, that if to a poet's or artist's perception

of beauty you unite the imaginative and susceptible temperament, you are bound to be "a general admirer." This also is one of the terms which foolish and misguided people misappropriate in the sense of reproach. But do you welcome it as an honorable distinction. In the ball room are assembled but a small gathering from among the beautiful women who convert into a fair and blooming garden what would otherwise be an arid, unlovely desert. Yet do you find it easy to select from among these one on whom to confer your whole heart.

Who and what is the man capable of withholding his admiration from this breathing master-piece, this crowning glory of creation—a beautiful woman? who remains insensible amid this festival of nature? who never regarded with affection, or addressed with compliment, any woman, until he chose one to be his companion for life?

"If such there breathe, go mark him well."

In every instance, I will venture to say, you will find him a narrow-minded, prosaic, selfish person, one who owes his safety to his insignificance, who either selected a wife from motives of interest, or who, owing to his total ignorance of the sex, has fallen a victim to the first designing fair one, who thought it worth her while to set her cap at him. And I wish her joy of such a piece of still life. I have known such muffs, men who choose a wife as they bought a horse, or ordered a coat, or conducted any other business transaction. Yet they have the folly to think they understand the sex because they are *married*. I, even I, Lothario Lovemall, have been told by one of these beings, that I did not understand women.

Such men fall an easy, and inglorious prey. Whereas to captivate one who has all his previous life been sunning himself in ladies eyes, indefatigably experimenting on his own heart and the hearts of others, and in fulfilment of his arduous and honorable mission, exposing himself heroically to female blandishments—

in short, a coxcomb and general admirer, of such a conquest, a woman may be well proud.

Many are the excellent, weighty, and convincing reasons I could adduce, did my limits permit, to show why every right-thinking and properly educated man should be a coxcomb and general admirer in the season of youth. But the whole matter has been so prettily summed up by Mr. N. P. Willis, in half-a-dozen lines, than I am content to leave the matter in his hands, more especially as the following quotation presents a clearly defined outline of my own character.

“Strange,” he writes, “how the same man who is so fickle in love will be so constant in friendship. But is it fickleness? Is it not rather a superflu of tenderness in the nature which overflows to *all* who approach the fountain. I have ever observed that the most susceptible of men are the most remarkable for the finer qualities of character. They are more generous, more delicate, of a more chivalrous complexion altogether than other men.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE POLKA.

“On with the dance, let joy be unconfined,
No sleep till morn when youth and pleasure meet,
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet.”
BYRON.

THE Polka appears to me the most delightful and the most remarkable of dances. Not only does it charm the votary of Terpsichore, but it is also susceptible of this higher praise, that it is worthy to engage the attention of the moralist and the philosopher. Before I had been initiated in its mysteries, I used to ponder deeply on the strange intuitive sympathy which enabled two human beings meeting for

the first time in their lives, without previous practice, or anticipated plan of action, to perform a series of difficult, impromptu evolutions with perfect unanimity and grace.

How two individualities can be thus welded together—a human being's will thus temporarily annihilated or held subservient to that of another (especially a *female* will); how a young lady but the previous instant, the very incarnation of caprice, impulse, and unbending pertinacity of character, should all at once permit a man to guide her movements, and that not by advice or persuasion, but by actual coercion; that she should turn and wind according to his lordly pleasure, now to the right, now to the left, now backing violently down the whole length of a crowded ball-room, now darting off at a tangent, and anon whirling rapidly like a dancing dervish, a teetotum, an excited crocodile bathing, or a ship in the Mael-Strom, is surely a spectacle well worthy to excite the curiosity and admiration of an enquiring mind.

The polka, when well danced, furnishes a very pleasing emblem of what married life ought to be; the lady obeying so cheerfully and confidingly, the gentleman directing and steering his partner through all the impending dangers and accidents of a crowded ball-room which may be likened to the rocks and shoals to be encountered in the voyage of life; and doing all this without the slightest show of arbitrary authority.

Happy augury (yet not altogether borne out by experience), that the partner so pliant in the dance will be equally docile as a partner for life. The similitude between the polka and the married state I recommend as perfectly new and original.

“Pereant male qui ante nosra, nost dixerint!”

It will bear examination too. In how many particulars does the resemblance of the polka to matrimony hold good, besides the graceful submission of the lady. Her partner must be firm; so must the husband. The male pol-

kiste must know his duty, and do it. To dance the polka well, requires, in some degree, the attributes of a hero. The head to plan, and the will to execute, are absolute essentials ; no amount of theory will supply the place of these. Not only must you have the genius to extemporise a figure, but the skill to reduce it to practice, and this must be done amid the confusion and bustle of a crowded evening party. Woe to you, if you lose your presence of mind, when the time for action arrives !

The polka, then, is a dance which pre-eminently displays masculine decision of character. There must be no feints, no half-measures, no undeveloped conceptions, no hesitation, no uncertainty in the back-step. To take a charming young lady in perfect time to the music, and in an improvised figure, through a crowd of your fellow immortals, all likewise in rapid motion, without inconveniencing her, or *severely* injuring any of the other dancers,

is an achievement which must be seen to be appreciated, which drives many an adventurous aspirant to despair, and of which the successful polkiste may well be proud.

I do not know whether Messrs. Gall and Spurzheim have admitted polkativeness among the other phrenological developments; but I incline to think, that if phrenology be really a science, it deserves a place there. "*Poeta nascitur, non fit*," and I doubt if education alone can ever make a polka-dancer. I have known many good, worthy men, of more than average abilities, and unexceptionable moral character, who never could succeed in dancing the polka respectably.

My brother coxcomb, I see you are gazing on that charmed circle, formed by a number of beautiful young women, clustering all together, as if willing, by the combined effect of their charms, to enhance the timidity of modest men. Poor trembling doves, will any hawk be bold enough to attack you? will that

charmed circle be invaded by a man. Imagine yourself, my brother coxcomb, an oriental stranger, to whom the scene is quite novel.

How astonished are you then, when a whiskered and moustachioed individual, clad in the habiliments of modern warfare, presumes to break the spell, and to thrust himself into that sacred enclosure of beauties. He goes up close beside that fragile, delicate creature in white, who, after a word spoken by a third person, stands up. Is she alarmed at being accosted by a man, "bearded like the pard," whom she never saw before in her life. It must be so. She is too frightened to scream. Perhaps she meditates escaping, though the instinctive cunning of her sex teaches her to assume that bewitching smile, to hide her terror. Music arises with its voluptuous swell. Instantly the gigantic warrior by her side, throws his right arm around her waist, and seizes her right, in his left hand. She is powerless in his grasp. Surely she will shriek

aloud for aid ; she will endeavour to elude the ruffian's hold ! You, still observing the extraordinary scene through the intellectual medium of an oriental stranger, are on the point of darting forward to the rescue—when returning from the realm of fancy to fact, you recognize Captain Spanker, of the Heavy Dragoons, dancing the polka with Miss Lydia Golightly.

How beautifully the two dance together ! How skilfully the gallant warrior holds her ! What knowledge do they display of the laws of motion ; what presence of mind ; what strict scrutiny in the midst of that mad whirl ; what method in those seemingly wild and purposeless rushes ; what hair-breadth escapes of collisions, which, at that tremendous pace, would surely prove fatal. The captain appears to have eyes in the back of his head. And how exquisitely does the lady second her partner's *impromptu* evolutions, How confidently does she surrender herself to his guidance, her white arm relieved by the scar-

let coat, as the tips of her fingers rest on the gold tassels of his right epaulette.

I can tell by the way in which a man stands up, and goes through the preliminary ceremonies, whether he is, or is not, attempting a feat beyond his capabilities. It is considerably later in the evening, and from amid the knot of young men, extremely backward in coming forward, who remain wedged in the doorway, and clustering in the immediate vicinity, in an agony of nervous trepidation, evinced by an expressive pantomime of alternate glances at their patent-leather boots, and twitches at their shirt-collars—advances young Limber, a timid individual, who has, at the eleventh hour, screwed up his courage to attempt the polka.

O, too fatal ambition! Prompted by his evil genius, he has actually selected Miss Lydia Golightly for a partner. Already the manner of the infatuated young man enables me to prophesy an entire failure. He lacks confidence, and confidence is half the battle.

Some men who dance badly, have an effrontery which carries off their blunders; but in this instance I foresee a shameful humiliation. He puts his arm awkwardly about the lady's waist. Most unpardonable of blunders, to put your arm *awkwardly* round a lady's waist. He barely touches the corsage with the tips of his gloves. Instead of bringing his partner directly opposite to him—the only proper position for the waltz or polka—his attitude obliges her to stand sideways, so that he will have no command over her, either materially or morally.

The pouting of those pretty lips, the impatient movement of the little foot, betray that this is no secret to Miss Golightly, who takes no particular pains to conceal her intense disgust. She anticipates what will happen; that he will tread upon her feet, tear her dress, knock her against somebody; she will have no pleasure in the dance, she fears she will be made a laughing-stock; and this with women is an unpardonable offence! Thine

indignation, O fair one, is perhaps excusable, yet it would be better policy, as well as better breeding, to moderate that look of scorn, which materially increases the helplessness of your ill-fated partner. Though a bad pol-kiste, young Limber would make an excellent domestic, inoffensive husband, and would stand any amount of curtain-lectures.

I knew how it would be. After a few spiritless turns, Miss Golightly sits down under the plea of a headache. The victim of misplaced confidence goes away a sadder and a wiser man; makes an abortive attempt to resume his position among the loungers near the door, but their looks of sympathy are too much for him; he gradually disappears and finds a refuge in the hall. He has lost all pleasure in the contemplation of his patent-leather boots; the state of his collar affords him no further interest; he is like the dying gladiator, reckless of everything. From time to time his pale face may be discerned peering

into the dancing-room like a Peri shut out of Paradise, the very model of a blighted being.

His faithless partner, recovered from her headache, is now whirling rapidly in the scientific grasp of Captain Spanker, of the Heavies, her breath lightly fanning his huge military whiskers. Charming spectacle to unconcerned spectators—a sorry sight to the poor wretch who has fallen a victim to his overweening confidence in his ability to dance the polka. He at least sees none of “the poetry of evening parties!”*

* For reflections *after* the ball, the reader is referred to subsequent pages, headed respectively, “The Prose of Evening Parties,” “The Matrimonial Mart, &c., &c.”

CHAPTER V.

HOW I CEASED TO BE A MUFF.

"Look here upon this picture, and on this."

HAMLET.

It may gratify any timid young man who may read these pages, to learn that I, even I, Lothario Lovemall, was not always the gay, irresistible, invincible lady-killer which I now am. It may interest him to know that I, who now pique myself as being thoroughly impregnable to the darts of Cupid, utterly incapable of being victimized by the arts of any woman,* was once

* This is a remarkable example of forgetfulness. In the elation caused by literary inspiration, Mr. Lovemall appears to be utterly oblivious of his matrimonial engagement, which he announced with so much pathos in chapter I.

young and unsophisticated, in a word—green ! To paraphrase the great Cham of Literature, “Ye who listen with credulity to the song of the sirens, and robe the idols of your own imagination; who expect constancy from women, and that a young lady’s promises of to-day will be binding on the morrow, attend to the experience of Lothario Lovemall, M.S.C.B. (Member of the Society of the Confirmed Bachelors).”

“*You are such a Muff !*”

These memorable words were applied to me, Lothario Lovemall, by Miss Matilda Mansbane, in the drawing-room of her mamma’s house, 1000, Upper Baker Street, on a certain very interesting occasion. In the first place how was it possible for me to anticipate a refusal of the offer of my hand and fortune? Miss Mansbane could not plead ignorance of my sentiments towards her, for had I not availed myself of all those excellent opportunities afforded by society through the medium of pic-nics, rides and saunters in the park,

evening parties, breakfasts, archery-meetings, morning calls, &c., &c., &c., for becoming acquainted with the real character of the woman I then too fondly hoped to make the partner of my joys and sorrows, the wife of my bosom, the mother of my children, the—but I must pause—this is too affecting.

No, I must persevere in the trying effort to clothe a true, sad, and let me add, an *edifying* story in the gay garb of a light, sparkling, and attractive style. The age is not quite averse to intellectual improvement, provided you gild the pill. Let me adopt then the spirit of Horace's line, "Why not tell the truth, even jestingly." Let me stoop to conquer. If I am amusing I shall be read. "No preaching," says society. "We want to be amused. If you must be instructive, and moralizing, and edifying, and improving, and all the rest of it, at least be as pleasant as you can with it." Gladly do I make this compromise with society, and proceed "to point a moral and adorn a tale."

Was I not a firm believer then in the perfect sincerity and frankness of woman? Did I not treasure up every little speech made to me by Miss Mansbane as the best possible evidence of her thoughts and feelings, utterly disbelieving and abhorring the celebrated '*mot*' of Talleyrand, "Language is given us to conceal our thoughts." Consequently, was I not delighted when I chanced one evening to overhear a confidential enquiry by her highly respectable mamma, of another "turbaned and malignant" dowager, touching my pecuniary resources. Under other circumstances I should have been intensely disgusted at the personality of these queries, and the special details which they elicited. Nothing was said of my mental or moral character, or even my personal appearance. The information related entirely to my personal and real estate, my expectations, my prospects, my position in society.

But I loved Matilda, and hailed any circumstance which favoured the successful issue

of my suit. Therefore, instead of regarding these two old ladies with abhorrence, I hailed them as beneficent fairies, and mentally—(only *mentally*, mind), embraced them both, inwardly congratulating myself, from the smiles subsequently beamed upon me by Mrs. Mansbane, that, from information she had received, she knew I was rich enough to be an eligible suitor for her daughter's hand. *Hand! indeed!* when I wanted every morsel of her, from the crown of her beautiful and stately head to the sole of her little foot—to be mine. Her thoughts, her affections, her *heart*—(I thought she had one then)—all of her to be *mine—mine for ever!*

Was I surprised two days after this to receive a politely-worded note from Mrs. Mansbane, reminding me that I had now met Matilda a sufficient number of times to form a perfectly competent opinion on her disposition and accomplishments, &c., and requesting me, as a man of honor, to respect the peace of mind of her innocent and too confiding child, and

either to declare myself forthwith, or by absenting myself in future from private parties and all places of amusement which Matilda frequented, to permit the impression I had made on the sensitive heart of the dear girl, to be effaced by the grand solace—*Time*!

Did I not thoroughly appreciate the propriety of this conduct? Was I for a moment selfish enough to imagine that I was entitled to more opportunities of studying Miss Mansbane's character? Was I unreasonable enough to expect to be asked to the house, that I might see my dear Matilda in all the advantage afforded by the fire-side circle, before I declared myself? Nothing of the kind. I was too well-bred, too well acquainted with the etiquette of society in Baker Street and the Squares, too well satisfied with the ample opportunities I had already enjoyed, and too thoroughly persuaded that I knew every thought in the innocent and ingenuous mind of the woman I loved, to indulge in any such absurd wishes.

I accordingly answered Mrs. Mansbane's letter, and requested an interview. My request was granted, and I received the mother's assent to my formal proposal. It did indeed strike me afterwards that this assent might have been more graciously given. According to the world's opinion, a gentleman with a respectable competence, who proposes for a penniless young lady, is bestowing rather than receiving a favour, whereas Mrs. Mansbane conducted the whole affair as if in giving her daughter to a man quite able to support her, and loving her to distraction, she was conceding to the most unreasonable of requests.

However, at the time I did not see the matter in this light. It required all my self-restraint to prevent myself from uplifting my voice and weeping aloud on the neck of my future mother-in-law, when she said, that, though her daughter might have ridden in her carriage, yet if I really loved her, she would not withhold her consent. Fortunately for both of us, before I could execute the *acco-*

lade prompted by the warmth of my feelings, Mrs. Mansbane had left the room. In a few minutes I knew by the sweep of her dress that Matilda had entered.

I say I knew by the sweep of her dress, for I had not the courage for some time to look up. It seems to me that a man should always be timid before the woman whom he really loves. When I did look up, I saw her sitting there before me, an image of radiant beauty. Let me attempt to describe her.

Matilda Mansbane was just the sort of woman in whose presence all those doughty resolves against the influence of female beauty, take flight at once; one of those grand, glorious types of womanly charms which cast around them a spell of enchantment, captivating at once all the susceptibilities of poetical, imaginative man, and gradually, but surely vanquishing the cold and practical. She was tall, but in her perfectly proportioned figure there was not the slightest approach to awkwardness. The free undulating sweep of the

form, the swelling bust, the setting-on of the small and beautiful head, the full, broad, but sloping shoulders vied in symmetry with an antique statue. The rich white and red of her complexion ; the long luxuriant black-brown hair falling in coquettish tresses down to her waist ; the full, rounded arms, worthy to be modelled for the Venus of Milo ; the white and even teeth ; the pouting coral lips ; the large dark-hazel eyes, whose piercing glance was softened by the fringe of long lashes ; the arched eyebrows ; and the ivory forehead, bounded by the wavy line formed by the natural curl of the hair ; all those charms, though I saw them but indistinctly then, are too firmly fixed in memory to be ever forgotten.

Had I not then a right to be astonished, not only at Miss Mansbane's refusal of a man whom she had encouraged by those thousand little nameless arts peculiar to women, and who had her mother's consent ; but still more at the singular manner in which her refusal was given. Was there anything odd or displeasing in the manner in which I made the interesting

avowal. I flatter myself there was not. Had I not gone down on one knee according to Hoyle—I mean according to the instructions given in the Hand-book of Etiquette for such occasions. Had I not placed my right hand over the region of my heart, and, although my deep-toned voice did certainly falter, had I not distinctly conveyed to Matilda, that I loved her better than any woman on the face of the earth. I could not say more than a few broken words it is true, for I loved her, and my heart was full.

While I was speaking, and for some time after, Miss Mansbane kept her head turned from me. This made me hope for a favourable reply. She seemed greatly agitated, as I thought, with tears. I could see her shoulders moving convulsively. I interpreted this also in my favour. She pulled out her handkerchief, but instead of applying it to her eyes, she crammed it into her mouth, and when she had sufficiently recovered from a fit of *laughter* ! to be able to speak, she said, “ *You are such a muff.*”

CHAPTER VI.

OPEN CONFESSION IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL.

“All is lost now to me for ever.”

LA SOMNAMBULA,

I HAVE no precise recollection of how I quitted Miss Mansbane's presence. I have an indistinct recollection of an elderly lady regarding me from one of the parlour windows in 1000, Baker Street, with an indignant expression of countenance, which plainly accused me of trifling with the feelings of “*her child!*” How many hours I wandered purposely, aimlessly, about the streets of London, with a strange, dead wonderment at my heart at my own ex-

istence, I know not, when suddenly I was recalled from a state bordering on madness by a confused shouting and execrations. Very gradually it dawned upon me that some one was being run over. I began to look about to see if I could render any assistance, when, just then, I felt a sharp blow on the shoulder from some hard substance, which knocked me down. I was myself the person who was being run over; but long ere I had clearly made this discovery a friendly hand had snatched me from before the horses of an omnibus, the pole of which had struck and upset me.

But for this, my troubles would probably have come to an end then and there. I have a confused recollection of the driver vituperating me in the most abusive manner, for being nearly killed, and of a stinging repartee, in the same choice language, given by a friendly bystander, who took my part. But I was too indifferent to pay much attention to the war of words, which promised to end in a very tidy

manual encounter. I only remained to thank the gentleman by whose kindness I had been saved from the impending danger, and then, finding I was not materially hurt, I took refuge from the inquisitive crowd, who were regarding me as if the whole thing had been got up expressly for their benefit. I turned down the first street at hand, which happened to be Jermyn Street.

I had not gone many yards when I heard myself hailed from a window, and looking up beheld my friend, Jack Devlin, beckoning me to come in. Jack holds a commission in the 150th Hussars, then stationed in Chatham. We fraternised together from that principle which often induces a man to seek an acquaintance in almost every respect diametrically opposite to himself. Jack had obtained a furlough of three weeks sick leave, which he was supposed to be spending with his mother in Hastings. It was astonishing how wonderfully the night air in the neighbourhood of the Haymarket agreed with his delicate constitution. He affirmed

that he found Bass's Pale Ale an excellent tonic, and to judge from the number of bottles which he daily emptied, he was fond of tonics. He affirmed that the enormous number of cigars which he smoked *per diem* were recommended by the faculty as a capital remedy for asthma. When I once gravely hinted that he must be mistaken in fancying himself so delicate, and that for a man labouring under such a complication of disorders, he was very stout, and ruddy, and had a most surprising appetite, he abruptly turned the conversation by asking me, with a laugh—whether I had ever read “Verdant Green.”

I found Jack at his toilet, although it was three o'clock, p.m. Such was the extraordinary confusion of ideas in the mind of this young man, that he called it morning, and said he had got up earlier than usual. Here the servant entered with sherry and soda water. Jack darted at the effervescing compound, gulped it down, and then said, with a sigh of pleasure, “I suppose, Lovemall,

you never knew what it was to have 'hot coppers' or to feel 'seedy' of a morning."

I replied, that I did not understand the exact signification of the slang terms "hot coppers" and "seedy," but I supposed he meant to imply that he had been exceeding drunk the previous evening. A fact, which, independently of its being his invariable habit, I should have guessed from the dead, fishy look of his eyes, and the trembling condition of his hands, which compelled him, after an abortive and ludicrous attempt to shave, through the back of his chair! to leave that achievement for the barber.

While Jack's toilet proceeded, he questioned me occasionally as to my own very evident discomfort. Knowing him, in spite of his faults, to be a good-hearted fellow, and feeling that instinctive burning love of sympathy which prompts us to seek an alleviation of our sufferings by imparting them to another, I made up my mind to take Jack into my confidence. Jack was just then preparing to

tie his cravat, an act, which I may here confess, I never could accomplish respectably ; a conventional, if not a moral failing, for which Miss Mansbane had frequently taken me to task, giving me Jack as a model.

With that wish to oblige her, even in trifles, which characterised me, I frequently applied to Jack for lessons in this noble art. But though Jack was a consummate master himself, it was out of his power to impart his knowledge. His patient and repeated teachings were in vain. The art of tying a cravat still seems to me one of those stupendous things which cannot be taught. It is an act of intuition, exemplified solely by coxcombs and men of similar genius. "*Poeta nascitur non fit.*" Neither author nor artist can give recipes for writing a book or painting a picture. The art of tying a cravat does not suffer itself to be explained, you must essay again and again. Some day, perhaps, the secret will dawn upon you ; and, as Columbus, after a life of disappointment, succeeded in discovering America,

so will you, after many failures, succeed in tying your cravat. Then will come your day of triumph, as you go forth, radiant in the consciousness of having achieved that hitherto mysterious, inexplicable, baffling knot, which proclaims you one of the initiated, and assists in winning you the hearts of the fair. On the discovery of Land, the same sailors who the day before had threatened to put Columbus in irons, now knelt before him as a superior being. Men who before laughed at and ridiculed you, will now regard you with admiration, or will evince their own despairing envy by the muttered words, "Heaven, how that man ties his cravat!"

As I watched Jack perform it, this act appeared to me one of the most agonizing of trials. My friend's countenance, at ordinary times good humoured and vacant, assumes a terribly significant expression of the anguish caused by thought, and gave rise to the following impromptu epigram:—

ON AN EXQUISITE AT HIS TOILET.

That look of wild despair which rose,
And frowning o'er his forehead sat ;
Was it a guilty conscience' throes ?
No ! he was tying his cravat !

It was to Jack's eternal honor that though he had already laid aside three *failures*, and had a fourth cravat in his hand, preparing, like Robert the Bruce, to conquer by repeated efforts of perseverance, he laid it down at once and listened patiently to my story till I had finished. He likewise permitted the first outbreak of grief to find a vent, and then, when he found me ready to listen, he undertook to prove to me in an address full of worldly wisdom, which not a little astonished me, that Miss Mansbane was right, and that I *was* a muff.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SECRET OF INGRATIATING ONESELF WITH
THE LADIES.

If you know anything preferable to these maxims, candidly communicate it, if not, with me make use of these.

HORACE.

IN order that the reader may know what manner of man I *was*! it is necessary to make the following statement. Some years ago I had made my *début* in society, under the firm conviction that women were morally and mentally superior to men. I read my Bible and my Tupper, and believed that I could not do better than pray for my future wife. My creed relative to young ladies was, that they

were angels; and I used to wonder, to quote from memory a passage written by some snobbish author trying to curry favour with ladies by depreciating men, why they condescended to mate with our wicked and degraded sex. I thought they did so out of their innate goodness and charity, sacrificing themselves at the shrine of duty. Perhaps Mr. Darwin, the author of "The origin of Species," Professor Owen, or some other eminent naturalist, might give a different theory to account for delicate and refined women being willing to marry. He might say something to this effect that—man is an animal, that woman is the female of man, and that a duchess is not so thoroughly degenerated but that some spark of Nature still resides in her bosom, and causes her to obey that great instinctive law which God has implanted in every animal—to seek a mate.

Perhaps I cannot paint the condition of my mind at this period better, than by saying that I was profoundly imbued with the principles

of female worth, as laid down in those deeply thrilling and interesting works of Mrs. Barbauld, Hannah More, Mrs. Chapone, Madame Genlis, Mrs. Ellis, and Miss Sinclair.

No courtship was ever conducted with greater respect to the lady's feelings than my courtship of Miss Mansbane. I would as soon have squeezed a rattle-snake as her hand, and yet I loved her so dearly. I treasured up her old gloves; the sight of a bonnet or dress in the street resembling hers, the chance inhaling of the same perfume which she used, made my heart beat and flutter; I hired music to play under the windows of the house in Baker Street, mingling in the crowd, an unrecognized spectator, only too happy to catch a glimpse of the loved one listening. I spent hours, in the silent watches of the night, gazing up at the windows of the room in which she slept; and last, not least, I wrote a great deal of poetry, which never met her eye, because I had not the courage to send her the verses in *M.S.S.*, and owing to a con-

spiracy among the publishers, none of them would undertake the publication of the volume.

The reader may think it odd, that loving Miss Mansbane so dearly, I was not more demonstrative to the lady herself. My respect chastened the ardour of my admiration. In her presence I felt like a subject before a queen. They say the ladies like a confident man best. Yet after all, what compliment to female beauty is equal to the silent and admiring awe, with which a man of earnest mind and refined feelings regards the woman whom he conscientiously believes to be better and purer than himself.

O young ladies, you are unwise in expecting eloquence from a lover ! A man who really loves you, will never be eloquent before he is assured of your state of feeling towards him. Not always, I should say, on the contrary *rarely, then !* When your beauty, your grace, accomplishments, good qualities, &c., have wrought on a man to such a degree that he feels the world can give him nothing

comparable to your love, when the very sight of you at a distance makes his heart flutter, when he feels jealous of every man under the age of sixty who approaches you, and is tempted to strangle every good looking coxcomb who pays you a compliment, when, half distracted by the alternations of hope and despair, he ventures at last, to learn his fate from your own lips ; do you expect eloquence at such a time? If you do, you expect him to behave as a man in love never would or could behave ! Nothing is easier than flirtation with a woman you do not love. Of course you like her a little, or you would not take the trouble to flirt with her. But when you begin to *love* a woman, you are no longer capable of flirtation. When your admirer is awkward, and timid, and silent, and hardly dares to look at you, when his hand trembles at the chance contact with yours, and he hardly dares to hold it lest he should offend you, when at last, after a sore struggle, there comes the faltering avowal from the over-

charged heart, in these few, but expressive, words, "*I love you,*" then, if I were a woman. I should feel well pleased to dispense with the *eloquence of words*.

Besides, I had heard many young ladies say, with a charming lisp, and the most delightful mispronunciation of the Queen's English, that they did not like to have nonsense talked to them by men, just as if they were incapable of understanding rational conversation, &c. I took the dear creatures at their word, and determined never to offend them in this particular. Happy man, I said to myself, I now know the secret of ingratiating myself with the sex I esteem, venerate, and admire! That secret is to talk sound sense to them, on every available opportunity. Women do not love nonsense.

It is true that this discovery could not be of any practical value to the majority of men, to whom the power of talking sense does not belong. Fortunately for me, however, I had good reason to believe myself among the

avored minority capable of turning their knowledge in this respect to good account. I do not wish to praise myself, but the interests of truth, and this narrative, oblige me to say that I am generally considered a well educated man, of good natural abilities. I came from college with "a double first." I had the classical authors at my fingers' ends. The chief spur to study, the grand aim of all my scholastic attainments was to fit myself for the society of—*woman* !

I firmly believed what I had so often read, and heard at public lectures, at Mechanics' Institutes, and elsewhere, and from ladies themselves invariably, that "the superior delicacy and refinement of the female nature, the superior quickness and keenness of her perceptive faculties, the superior subtlety of her intellect, the superior, &c., &c., &c., gave woman an immense advantage above the overtasked mind of man, shackled by the conventionalities of political and social life, and dulled

by coarse contact with the every day world, &c., &c., &c."

To the companionship of woman, therefore, I looked for an intellectual treat, "a feast of reason and a flow of soul," far surpassing the friendship with my own sex. To be appreciated, to be understood, to be valued, to be *loved*, for the immortal qualities of the mind by one of those beatific beings would realize the most imaginative aspirations of the poetic and the artistic soul.

Among my male companions my conversation was reputed both edifying and agreeable. I determined that with ladies it should be pre-eminently so. In the presence of women, young and old, single and married, I never lost an opportunity of discussing, or at least introducing some improving, profound, elevating topic. In literature I endeavoured by every possible means to discover in what direction their reading and sympathies lay. I travelled rapidly over the extensive and

fertile field of ancient classics. I expatiated *con amore* on the simplicity of Herodotus, the father of history, the sublimity of Homer, the father of epic poetry, the majesty of Æschylus, the father of tragedy, the perfection of Sophocles, the pathos of Euripides, called by Aristotle the most tragic of poets, the versatility of Horace, the sweetness of Virgil; I contrasted the diffuseness and elegance of Livy with the concise epigrammatic style of Tacitus, the womanly tenderness of Ovid with the relentless severity of Juvenal's satire.

CHAPTER VIII.

PRECEPT NOT ALWAYS REDUCABLE TO
PRACTICE.

GRADUALLY my eyes opened to my own conceit! My conversation was too puerile and superficial to interest women! I knew not how to season the rich food, so as to make it palatable to their delicate and fastidious appetites. No lady condescended to continue the subjects which I proposed. Even when I said a good thing, which would have elicited applause from my masculine friends, the wit was not sufficiently pointed to excite the slightest notice of my lady listeners.

I had begun to despair of my own powers

of calling forth the latent tastes and capabilities of the female mind, when it suddenly occurred to me—the lady to whom I am talking, and who (though she has visited both Athens and Rome), yawns when I speak to her of the Parthenon, Marathon, the Arch of Titus, the Colosseum, or the tomb of Cecilia Metella: may possibly have a mathematical turn of mind, and may prefer natural philosophy and the exact sciences to classical literature and antiquities. Accordingly I lost not a moment in shifting the helm and starting on a new tack. For two hours I tried her with Euclid and Archimedes, I touched lightly on the works of Newton and La Place, the differential Calculus, Napier, logarithms, algebra, fluxions, plane, and spherical trigonometry, &c., &c., &c.

Finding that these topics made no demand on her dormant sympathies, I branched off into Physiology, Zoology, Geology, Mineralogy, Conchology, and Fossil Remains, from which the transition was easy to the grand scientific

question of the day—the Origin of Species, a subject in which I take a great interest, and after stating my views at some length, I concluded by saying how gratifying it must be to all right-minded persons to find the topic which had so long agitated the scientific world, and which had been handled with hesitation by such men as La Marck, the author of the *Vestiges*, Sir Charles Lyall, Professor Owen, and Mr. Darwin, completely set at rest by the dictum of that celebrated naturalist—*Spurgeon!**

At the end of two hours I found I had made the circle of the sciences (not quite so thoroughly as Lord Brougham is said to have done, perhaps), from Astronomy down to Phrenology, inclusive! Still finding no response, I plunged into the history of the world, as preserved in human annals, and gave a rapid compendium from the Mosaic account of creation down to our own time. I

* Doubtless Mr. Lovemall refers to the far-famed lecture on the gorilla, when Mr. Spurgeon so complacently announced that there was a great gulph between himself and an anthropomorphous ape.

touched on the five great empires—Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome; the decline and fall of the Mistress of the World, the rise and progress of Christianity, and the Mahometan Religion, the middle ages, the Crusades, the culminating splendour of the Church of Rome, the Reformation, the French Revolution, and diverged gracefully into the present political aspect of affairs in Europe, and all parts of the world!

I must have been singularly unfortunate in my female listeners, for though I observed the spectacles of my learned friend, Professor Zimmerman, of the Mythological society, quivering with delight as he heard my animated flow of language, I mention it as a remarkable fact, that neither the past of Europe, the future of America, the prospects of China and Japan, the condition of India, the precarious position of the Pope, the solution of the Italian question, not even the recent shocking fate of our missionaries in the Can-

nibal Islands, excited the least enthusiasm among the ladies.

The only reply vouchsafed to me, in all cases, was either silence, with a dull, dissatisfied expression of countenance, a pout, a lurking smile, or a sarcasm. Occasionally, when I had become thoroughly persuaded by the demeanour of some fair one that she was attentively listening to my discourse, and eagerly devouring my words, and overpowered with the effect of my eloquence, I was suddenly awakened from this agreeable delusion by her putting a question, or making an observation totally irrelevant to the subject, which showed that she had heard, or understood, nothing of what I had been saying; or else, if I could abstract myself sufficiently from my own enthusiasm to note her carefully, I perceived that while still feigning attention, her dark, gazelle-like orbs were roving stealthily up and down my person, scanning the tie of my cravat, the style of my breast-pin, studs, or

watch-chain, the fit of my vest, the shape of my boots, the curl of my hair, &c.

I frequently surprised Matilda Mansbane in this scrutiny. I knew not, till too late for my peace of mind, that the woman whom I fondly hoped to call *my wife*! whom I believed to be with me at that moment in the realms of imagination and thought, too much occupied with my mind to dwell on my exterior, much less my costume, the proofs of my tailor's skill, was in reality taking an inventory of every article of my dress, scanning the shape of my nose, my breadth across the shoulders, taking stock of my wardrobe, my perishable characteristics, speculating on my pecuniary position, my social status, appraising me, in short, according to *her* capabilities of estimating—a *man*!

There were many other things then for which I could not satisfactorily account. How I found it so difficult to get partners for a quadrille, for at this period of my life I declined, on principle, the round or fancy dances,

such as the waltz, polka, and schottise, &c., as tending to bring men and women into too close contact with each other, and exciting light ideas; why the ladies preferred for partners men whom, I was confident, I could have logically demolished in ten minutes, who were totally devoid of original ideas, who could not construe a line of Homer or Horace, and did not know the difference between Greek and Hebrew type, whose sole accomplishment seemed to be uttering, in a loud and vapid voice, the most inane and insipid compliments; how it was that my name came to be associated with the words, "Pedant," "Walking Dictionary," "Book-worm," &c., &c., &c.

Had any man dared to hint to me, Lothario Lovemall! then in the full flush of my youthful illusions, that one of those beautiful beings, whom I worshipped as the incarnation of all that was most sublime and poetical on earth, really preferred small talk, silly compliments, and foolish flattery on her mortal charms, and the society of coxcombs, fops, and fools, to

that of superior and intellectual men, I should have hurled back the assertion as a base fabrication. Nay, I am not sure, but that in my righteous wrath, I should have yielded to the temptation to exorcise him as a fiend in human shape, or suppress him as a miscreant, unworthy to live!

Jack, as I said, listened patiently to my story, "which being done," he began to knit his brows severely, a certain sign with my friend, of that (with him unusual and labourious,) exertion of the brain, called *thought*. After some time spent in collecting and arranging his ideas, the oracle spoke as follows:

"My dear Lothario, it is odd that a fellow with such a knowledge-box as you've got, and so doosed well posted up in everything else, should be such a regular spoon where the women are concerned."

Here was a pleasant beginning. To my certain knowledge, Jack had passed his examination previously to being gazetted to a commission, (to use a significant slang

expression,) by the skin of his teeth. Indeed I've heard him admit, that in spite of my "*coaching*," as he called it, for which he always appeared sincerely grateful, he never would have "pulled through" but for his interest at the Horse Guards. And this man, who cannot even now achieve a decent letter to his colonel, without spoiling half-a-quire of note-paper, begins by calling me, Lothario Lovemall, an Oxford Graduate, and Member of the Philological Society, "a regular spoon." To make use of Jack's phraseology, "I like that, rather."

My friend resumed in a slang very popular with "Young England," to convey his sentiments, by saying directly the reverse of what he meant. "That Matilda Mansbane ain't a flirt; no, not at all; she ain't saucy with it neither; she don't take delight to defeat the little games of that old hooker, her mother, to get her settled; she don't take a pride in tormenting the men, and then destroying their peace of mind; she hasn't served out

half-a-dozen fellows, whom I could name, exactly as she treated you ; she won't die an old maid, in spite of her handsome face. Oh no, not at all !”

Here Jack burst into a fit of laughter, at my rueful physiognomy, and apologized immediately after. “ Beg pardon, Lovemall, she used you shamefully ; the truth's the truth ! but it shouldn't be spoken at all times. You *are* a muff, but Matilda Mansbane had no right to tell you so. And now I advise you to throw all that over here,” and Jack executed an expressive pantomime with his thumb over his left shoulder, which was intended to signify that I should banish all recollection of my disappointment as soon as possible.

CHAPTER IX.

MAKING A MAN OF ME.

"Dost thou think because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?"

TWELFTH NIGHT.

AFTER Jack had spent some time in convincing me, that in spite of my book-learning and logic, in knowledge of the world, and especially in female character, I had my education to commence, he proposed that my tuition should begin forthwith, under his auspices.

I was so low and wretched, that I dreaded being alone, and was glad of any excitement for a change. In a word, I yielded to Jack's entreaties, who immediately declared, with

an unnecessary profusion of oaths, his determination to make a man of me. "I will introduce you to night, by Jove, to a set of the jolliest fellows you ever saw. To night, by George, you shall see life for the first time. And now let's liquor, I can take you to a place where there's the prettiest bar-maid in London."

Jack's process of making "a man of me," will, to many readers, seem so extraordinary, that it may be worth while to linger for a short time on this part of my life, though I confess I look back to it with feelings of sadness and humiliation. My initiation into "The Sons of Anacreon, took place that evening. I found myself amid a scene of conviviality, utterly novel to me, and I experienced the usual sensations of a novice. I felt dazzled, confused, and a little ashamed at being so thoroughly unsophisticated, where every body else seemed so perfectly at home. I concealed

*The author wishing to show how young men are initiated in dissipation, introduced a portion of this scene in "The Intellectual severance of Men and Women."

my ignorance as well as I could, by drinking a great deal more than I ought to have done, to show Jack that I was not such a muff as he thought me.

Gradually the wine began to take effect. I began to experience certain pleasurable sensations utterly new to me. I recalled classical descriptions of similar scenes from the Odes of Anacreon and Horace, so frequent in praise of Bacchus. There were, then, joys of which I had not previously dreamed, the joys of drinking, of good-fellowship. I joined in the chorus of a drinking song :

"Let us drink, let us drink, while time passes,
After death there's no drinking at all."

I began to see everything through my own inexperience, and the temporary excitement of an ardent nature, aided by the strong reaction to my previous dejection. Time passed on, and the stimulus took effect, till at last I began to feel as if I could embrace the whole world; all my antagonists, all my prejudices

were gone. I had not an enemy among mankind. The last attempt at a reasoning process, I remember, was asking myself, "how that could be wrong which produced such delightful and charitable sentiments?"

My eyes began to sparkle, I entered into conversation with those on each sides of me. I not only laughed at the jokes, but made some which elicited laughter. Each speaker seemed wittier, each joke better than the last. When it came to my turn, the chairman called on me for a song. In default of singing, I must either tell a story or make a speech. Jack had benevolently begun to intercede for an exception to the law in my favour, when, to his astonishment, I accepted the latter alternative. I got on my legs and made a speech. What I said I know not, but it was received with great applause.

No sooner had the jingling of glasses subsided, than Jack stood up to propose my health. "He wished, fearlessly, to demand of the oldest member then present, if there

was a single instance upon record, of any novice, on his first introduction to 'The Sons of Anacreon,' coming out in such a right-down, slap-up style, he might add, in such a whole-souled manner, as his friend, Mr. Lovemall" (cries of "no, no.") "He was proud to call Mr. Lovemall his friend. To say that he was a good fellow, would but poorly express his merit. He asked confidently, was he not a trump, a bird, a bang-up fellow, and—no mistake—was he not a—a—he wanted words to express what he was. The English language, the language of Milton, Shakespear, Dupper, Dr. Humming, and Sturgeon, sank under him in endeavouring to convey his good qualities, his noble, social, magnanimous, uncompromising spirit. He was prepared to say, that had it not been for the 'coaching' of his *learned friend*, and he begged to remind the chairman, that he did not use the words 'learned friend,' in the idle unmeaning sense of parliamentary usage, but advisedly, in the most strict, liberal sense which could be attached to those words:

had it not been for the “coaching” of his learned friend, *his*, the speaker’s, services might have been lost to his Queen and country!

“Stay, on reflection there was a word, one word, perhaps the only one which could be found applicable. Was he not justified in calling his friend, Mr. Lovemall, *a brick—yes, a regular brick* (great cheering). He was proud and happy to find that the Sons of Anacreon endorsed his sentiments. And now, before he concluded, he would ask one question; it was this—Was Mr. Lovemall a man to hide his light under a bushel any longer? was it for such a man to pore over musty books, now that he had found out the right path? now that he had seen something of life? Was he wrong in hoping, trusting, wishing that Mr. Lovemall would persevere, that he would still continue to be an ornament to society, and not go back to his wallowing in the mire; he alluded to his studies, which, however estimable, comparatively speaking, were not

to be named in the same breath with the more active pursuits of men of the world, with the especial purpose for which that society was organized? Was he wrong in hoping that Mr. Lovemall would not bury talents which might be so beneficially employed in enlightening the human race, and so materially promoting the cause of humanity and progress, and especially the feast of reason and the flow of soul among the Sons of Anacreon?"

This splendid specimen of Jack's oratorical powers is received with deafening applause. I get up to reply. I quote Byron:—

Oh, talk not to me of a name great in story.
The days of our youth are the days of our glory.

I quote Mr. D'Israeli,—“ Nothing is so painful in our mature years as the consciousness of a youth not enjoyed.” I quote Horace—“*Nunc est bibendum.*” “*Dulce est desipere in loco.*” “*Dum vivimus vivamus.*” Some understand, some don't. The latter applaud the most vociferously. I continue speaking for an in-

definite period; I experience no desire to conclude; the subject appears to expand to indefinite dimensions. I raise my glass to my lips unconsciously and mechanically from time to time, and set it down empty, but I always find it full. I am not aware at the time that my right hand neighbour—a gentleman whose name I do not know, but with whom I have sworn an eternal friendship—has been constantly replenishing it. Occasionally I have a vague and partial consciousness that I must have wandered from my subject, if I had ever had any one in particular, as I find myself speaking of “Home,” “Female beauty,” “the National Debt,” and other irrelevant topics. But my attention is suddenly distracted by a rapid succession of remarkable phenomena. For some time past I have seen *two* chairmen, the lights are certainly multiplied, and I experience, though without any alarm, the shock of an earthquake, which causes the floor to tremble and renders it extremely difficult for me to keep my feet. All at once, lights, com-

pany, chairmen disappear, and after a terrible night-mare, I awake next morning with a racking headache, a disordered stomach, a burning thirst, and a state of thorough physical suffering, which is only surpassed by the mental torture inflicted by conscience, as my too faithful memory recalls the degradation of the previous evening.

Jack comes to see me, orders sherry and soda water, which I pour down my parched throat with a strange relish, and says, "Well, old boy, how do you feel? pretty bobbish, eh? I thought we'd never get you up stairs. You do look seedy. No wonder, after being so lumpy last night." "Was I—, was I—?" I began to interrogate, feeling ashamed to say the word. Jack replies, "Never saw a more decided case of *spifflication*."

Jack's process of "making a man of me" was gradually to introduce me to a life of dissipation, which, but for the feeling of reckless indifference produced by my severe disappointment, I would have shunned with loath-

ing. But the truth contained in Pope's lines was verified in my case—

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen ;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

I was at first startled at libertinism, then yielded from the force of example and the fear of ridicule, combined with other accidental causes. As some extenuation of my fault I must remind the reader that I was not more than three-and-twenty.

Why should I dwell on this sad phase of my life. Let me say briefly I followed Jack's precepts and example. My earnestness of temperament, when I had once broken through the trammels of virtue* made me plunge more profoundly into debauch, and drink more deeply of "the Circean cup" than many a man of weaker principles or looser con-

* Prédicateur qui voulez me ramener à la vertu, dites-moi qu'elle est indispensablement nécessaire; mais ne me déguisez pas qu'elle est sévère et pénible.

Manon Lescaut par l'Abbé Prévôt.

science. Every day I became more and more of a man in Jack's estimation, less and less of a man in my own ; that is, when I had the courage to *reflect*. I learnt to play, to bet ; I read *Bell's Life* and dabbled in sporting matters. If the Staleybridge Infant defeats the Champion I win a poney. I have a book on the Derby, and, according to Jack's account, "I stand to win," under any circumstances, though I confess I am not very sanguine in the matter.

Jack takes me behind the scenes, and introduces me to Mademoiselle Rosalie Bellefleur, a *première danseuse*, with the easiest manners I ever beheld. I become an habitué of the coulisses, and Mademoiselle Rosalie is frequently seen in my brougham at Richmond, Greenwich, and elsewhere. Long before the year is out, Jack confesses that I have grown up to the full stature of *manhood*. He can do no more for me ; teach me nothing else ; my education is complete. He even admits, with a sigh of admiration, as he regards the

fashionable coxcomb into which, under his auspices, I have converted myself, that he knocks under to me; that I am more fit to give, than to take lessons; that I have surpassed his most sanguine expectations, and that he is proud of me. Poor simple Jack, with the best intentions in the world, quite unconscious that he has been labouring to ruin his friend.

CHAPTER X.

POETICAL JUSTICE.

"Thou'rt nothing. All are nothing now."

BYRON.

MY return to society two years afterwards, was as complete a triumph as I could desire. My outer man was displayed to the best advantage by a fashionable tailor. My bashfulness had long ago been buried in the tomb of all the Capulets. I did not now pour out the treasures of my learning to women, for on my book-lore I had grafted the knowledge of human nature, and I now valued society at what it was worth. My conversation with

ladies was "small talk"—*small talk* indeed! Fulsome flattery, veiled under the most superficial disguise. Ladies, who had formerly with difficulty prevented themselves from laughing in my face, now hung upon my words. They admired me because I was *a man of the world*! Little did many of them imagine what a price I had paid for this enviable distinction.

Two years after I had been jilted by Miss Mansbane, I met her at a ball at Mrs. Harpooner's. We danced in the same quadrille, and I saw her furtively regarding me, and listening to a lively conversation which I was carrying on with my lovely partner, Harriet Harpooner, who disputed with Matilda the claim to be the *belle* of the ball. Not all her practised duplicity could hinder my *quondam* flame from showing her astonishment at the striking metamorphosis she discovered in me.

Our acquaintance was renewed, and soon reached its former intimate footing. In spite of Jack Devlin's remonstrances against my

softness in permitting "that girl Mansbane" to victimize me again, I persisted in ingratiating myself with my old love. I practised *con amore*, and with perfect success, the new principles to which I had become a convert. I was no longer the sighing, dying, whining, pining lover, "with a woeful ballad made to his mistress's eye-brow." I reduced to practice the theory of Byron's lines, beginning—

Little I ween he kens of woman's breast,
Who deems that wanton thing is won by sighs.

I piqued and soothed Matilda by turns, and soon I had the satisfaction of perceiving that the once haughty beauty, while boasting that she had re-conquered me, had become in reality *my* slave.

Probably Mrs. Mansbane thought that Matilda and I understood each other, for she did not recur to the old tactics until our flirtation had become conspicuous to all. When at Mrs. Mammon's ball, Matilda had so far broken through *les convenances* as to dance

with me the whole evening, Mrs. Mansbane did give me a gentle hint; to which I responded, by requesting an interview with her daughter on the following day. Although my intending mother-in-law strove to affect a decent indifference, I perceived the most lively satisfaction in her countenance as she gave a gracious assent.

On the morrow, Matilda and I were sitting *tête-à-tête* in the drawing-room in Baker Street. My lovely companion's beauty was displayed to the greatest perfection by the most becoming *demi-toilette*, and she looked radiant in the expectation of the approaching declaration. After prefacing by a number of little nothings, discussing the ball of the previous evening, &c., the conversation assumed a more tender hue.

"Was it not delightful in the conservatory last night, so cool, so refreshing, after the heated dancing-room? Mamma scolded me so for stopping so long in the night air. I'm sure I thought we had only been there five

minutes, instead of three-quarters of an hour."

"It was a pleasant three-quarters of an hour?" I said, enquiringly.

"A nice question for you to ask," replied Matilda, pouting, "when you engrossed me the whole evening."

"Matilda," I said, "I am sorely tempted to say something in all frankness—"

I paused.

"Well," murmured Matilda, in the lowest of voices, after a silence of several minutes.

"A burnt child dreads the fire," I replied. "To be refused twice by the same woman would be a desperate wound to a man's vanity. Have you forgotten, Matilda, here, in this very room, two years ago, how you replied to my offer. I remember your very words, "*You are such a muff!*"

"Oh! I never said that. Oh, no! At least, surely—surely, I never could have said anything so rude. Well, yes—I believe—I recollect I did say so, but—" she laid her

hand on my arm with a gesture full of coquetry, and shot a glance at me from under her long eye-lashes, which she intended and probably believed to be irresistible, as she added, "I retract them, you are no longer the same man. You are quite changed, you know. *You are not a muff now !*"

"You are right," I replied, "I am no longer the same man. Will you listen to me without laughing?"

There was little need for this request. Matilda's manner presented a very decided contrast to her demeanour of two years ago. Her shoulders did not now shake with suppressed mirth. She sat like a statue; all affectation, all conventionality for the time forgotten, utterly absorbed in the words which fell from my lips.

"Miss Mansbane, two years ago, when I was pure and good, you rejected the noblest offer which can be made to a woman—the offer of a sincere, faithful heart. You were not satisfied with simply rejecting, you treated

me with ridicule and scorn. I was then—yes, I say it myself—a man whom a virtuous woman might have been proud to accept. I was unpolluted, and I—*loved you!* I believed in *you!* I would have cherished *you!* I saw my type of female excellence in *you!* You were right, I was indeed “a muff” then.

“What am I now? I have sown, my wild oats, as the world calls it. Do you know what that implies? It means that I have degraded myself in my own esteem, lost my robe of purity, and with it, my beautiful illusions respecting your sex. Now I can re-echo Byron’s lament—

“No more—no more—oh! never more on me
The freshness of the heart shall fall like dew.”

“But the dissipation into which men are permitted to plunge with impunity is a fitting—a necessary preparation to enable us to sink to that depravity of the mind and heart which can make us worship *women like you.* Start not. I have taken my degrees in vice. I

have sullied my soul, and society—good virtuous pharisaical society, instead of spurning, opens her arms and welcomes the *roué*.

“It is such women as you, who, wearing the mask of hypocritical prudery, are the ruin of men; who hold out a premium to sin, who admire us for our *errors*. But you shall not have the satisfaction of finding that you have utterly ruined me. I loathe and despise a society which caresses me, because I have forfeited my own self-esteem.

“Henceforth I quit old associations, and return to a rational life. Perhaps some day I may again become worthy of the love of a *good woman*. Miss Mansbane, I wish you a good morning.”

Miss Mansbane regarded me with a look of rage, in which all feminine dignity, cunning, and grace, were forgotten. For once I saw her without artifice, and heard her speak with sincerity as she hissed out the words, “You have behaved shamefully, and *I hate you*.”

“Thank you,” I replied, “I shall quit this

room with a much better opinion of myself than I had when I entered it," and I withdrew. Whether Miss Mansbane appreciated the practical lesson I had given her—whether it was her pride alone which was wounded, or if her conscience had been touched, I know not. Women have the power of concealing their sentiments better than men. I think this episode has *a moral*.

CHAPTER XI.

LAURA.

“ Ah, me ; for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tale and history,
The course of true love never did run smooth.”

SHAKESPEARE.

THOU wert beautiful, Laura—exceedingly beautiful ! Yet not for thine alabaster brow, and the eyes beneath which could flash with enthusiasm, sparkle with mirth, and melt with pity—not for the rich ruby of thy cheek, or the raven hair, which flung back and sweeping thy shoulders, furnished me with a model for a Hebrew prophetess, or a vestal virgin—not for these I loved thee, Laura. If thy pure

spirit and glorious intellect had been enshrined in a casket less gorgeous, I would have loved thee still the same. Of thee how truly do I echo the sentiment of those words which I loved to hear thee sing :—

“I must have loved thee hadst thou not been fair.”

It was while I was on a sketching tour in Wales, that I met Laura. Her family were on intimate terms with some very old friends of mine, and our acquaintance ripened into friendship, and from friendship into *love*! Laura was an enthusiastic votary of the art which then had taken me temporarily captive. She loved to hear me discourse of the great masters, Titien, Raphael, Murillo, Rubens, and to receive practical lessons in handling the pencil and the brush. Little did I think that these early efforts, which beguiled the time till hours flew like minutes, as I guided her trembling hand—her little, soft, white, delicate hand, whose touch thrilled me—over which we laughed, out of the gladness of our hearts,

so merry a chorus then; little did I think they would become blistered with my tears.

I taught Laura Latin, and I used to read to her translations of my favourite Greek dramatists. We would weep together over the woes of Antigone and Iphigeneia; and then when our souls were too full—for reading—too full for speech, music lent its aid to complete the mystic influence of the sister arts. When Laura sang, it seemed as if the sympathy which knits our souls together had found its most fitting and eloquent expression. In that grand diapason, the past, present, future, all struggled for sole possession of the imagination, till it seemed as if our souls were lifted above this world, with all its poetry and beauty into another more bright, more beautiful, over-arching it in the Heavens.

The love of little-minded women, as I had found in the case of Miss Mansbane (and others), stunts a man's intellectual progress, represses the sallies of his imagination, paralyzes the efforts of genius, and morally de-

praves; but to love Laura was to sympathise with everything that was beautiful, grand, and sublime. Laura was not jealous of the intellectual development of the man she loved. She did not despise, but encouraged the empire of the Muses. She nursed and kept alive in my heart the flame of ambition, which it is the aim of ordinary love to destroy.

Yet there were times when her beauty bewitched and dazzled me, when inanimate nature veiled her majestic face, as if unable to compete with this master-piece of creation. It was when we walked together on the seashore, and Laura herself reproached me for my remissness, as a fellow labourer, in the practical study of Conchology, too bewildered to think of, or see anything but Laura herself, as she stooped to pick the shells from the sand, while the western breeze deepened the tinge of carmine on her cheek, or unravelled the long curls of her hair. At such times I would sit down on the sand, and try and sketch her. But in vain! The picture

was in my heart, but the page of my sketch-book remained blank.

That memorable ride through pleasant, shady, green lanes, when her horse took fright at a gypsy woman by the road-side, shied, and threw her ; the agony with which I saw her lying for a moment almost under the animal's feet. In the same instant of time almost, I had flung myself from the saddle, caught her in my arms, and rescued her from her dangerous position. In that crisis, oblivious of all save my deep love, I told the secret of my soul in the incoherent rhapsody which I murmured over the prostrate form which I held pressed against my heart. Laura herself recalled me from my paroxysm of almost hysterical grief by repeated and earnest assurances that she was not hurt. Save a slight scratch on her cheek from contact with the gravel, she had escaped uninjured. Laura must have known ere this that I loved her. Yet never before had I found courage to confess the strong, silent, earnest, absorbing

love which filled my heart. But now, to have her form within my arms, and not to be chidden, to know that I had saved her, that I could protect with my manhood, that head so fair, which rose and fell with every heave of my breast, while the flakes of her perfumed tresses were wafted across my face. Oh! it needed not words at such a time to tell we loved each other!



I will not dwell on the gradual, and, as I thought, too successful attempts, to wean Laura from her affection for me; how our intimacy slackened, cooled, and finally ceased, ere she consented to receive the addresses of Lord Revel, a *roué* and sporting man, who had squandered a fortune on the turf. This man did not love Laura. It was not in his debased, corrupted nature to love anybody or anything but himself; but he was to receive a large fortune with her hand, and among his own

circle of associates he sneered at the wealthy *parvenu* family, into which he was about to marry. He who did not disdain to wreck a woman's happiness, and accept the merchant's gold to re-gild his tarnished escutcheon. Laura, I then thought, to be a willing partner in this base transaction.

Still I did not cease to love her. *I could not!* The Great Master of the human heart has said most truly—

“Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.”

She went to spend some time with the noble family to whom she was soon to be allied, at their country seat, in the neighbourhood of the town where Laura's family resided, a beautiful watering place on the west coast.

While there, I received a formal commission, in my professional capacity, to paint her portrait. I taxed my ingenuity in vain, to account for my being selected for this duty ;

was it to mark that all had ended between Laura and myself? to illustrate the immeasurable gulf which existed between the *artist*, who had dared to aspire to her, whom Lord Revel had selected to be his bride? Was it an insult planned by my rival, to make my humiliation more signal. Did Laura (*once my Laura*,) sanction this intended mortification to my pride? or was there some hidden worthier motive,—a relenting,—a desire to see once more, by the only means in her power, the man she had once loved—ere we were separated for ever.

I went. I would have gone, whatever had been the motive. Such love as I felt for Laura, disdained all slights and humiliations; and yet it did indeed require all the nerve I

* There appears some inconsistency here. Mr. Lovemall has previously represented himself as a man of good family, with a competence. From being eagerly sought as a son-in-law by the worldly Mrs. Mansbane, and from some passages in Chapter IX., he would seem to have had a *very respectable competence*. The apparent contradiction may be accounted for by the supposition that he has been living beyond his income, and has been obliged to convert his taste for art, into a source of professional emolument. Or he may have been merely practising as an amateur, hiding his true position, in order to assure himself of the disinterestedness of Laura's love.

possessed, to go through this trial. To appear before her, to spend hours in her presence, in my altered relations towards her; no longer a lover, or even a friend, or equal, but a kind of hired artisan; for I felt *that* was the light in which her intended husband's family regarded me. Oh, how *strange* and *bitter* it was to experience the cold conventional bow of Laura, instead of the greeting we had once exchanged. Ah, they had schooled her well; she had profited by the lessons of her aristocratic friends; and I—I too, with a breaking heart, called *my pride* to my aid, and no glance, tone, or gesture told how keenly I felt the blow. Well did I support the scrutinizing gaze of those cold grey eyes, bent upon me by the supercilious old dowager, the mother of Lord Revel. For that I cared little, or for the patronising impertinence of her lady visitors.

Yet there was a trial harder to endure than Laura's coldness, and this was the freedom and ease of Lord Revel's attentions. When I saw

him bend his bold, libertine gaze upon her, or address her in the low tones of a lover, while his breath stirred the tresses reposing on her shoulders, or take her hand, or, in short, avail himself of any of the familiarities permitted to a declared suitor, then indeed I felt my lip quiver with suppressed passion, and had a violent struggle to maintain my self-possession. He seemed to find a secret pleasure in thus making me feel my false position, never noticing me, or giving me the least handle for a quarrel.

And then, half-stung to madness, by reflecting on my rival's triumph, I called to mind all that I knew of his private life, his intrigues, his betting transactions. Had I not a right to make use of this knowledge in the critical situation of affairs? But further reflection told me how futile would be such disclosures, coming from *me*! Either they would disbelieve, or knowing them to be true, disregard them. Was it not understood already, that his rank was more than sufficient to whitewash all his immoralities.

Nor did I grieve solely because of the cup of happiness dashed from my own lips. If I could have hoped that this marriage might have brought happiness to Laura, I was man enough, *lover* enough to have stifled selfish sorrow. But I knew otherwise, and I trembled at the thought of the future they were preparing for Laura. Wedded to a man whom she could not love or respect, every day that disclosed to her his real character, and habits making the gulf wider between them, without a heart on which to lean; would she not be peculiarly susceptible to the contaminating influences of society, might she not add another to the host of women who have fallen under similar circumstances; victims of marriages contracted without the holy tie of love. I knew not then the gross injustice I did Laura, by this doubt. *Die!* she might from the want of sympathy and love—become guilty—never!

CHAPTER XII.

THE FIRST STROKE OF FATE.

"Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing."

SHAKESPEAR.

"What! do not the silent hours
 Beckon thee to Gherardi's bridal bed?
 Is not that ring"—a pledge, he would have said,
 Of broken vows; but she with patient look,
 The golden circle from her finger took,
 And said—"Accept this token of my faith,
 The pledge of vows to be absolved by death;
 And I am dead or shall be soon—my knell
 Will mix its music with that merry bell.
 Does it not sound as if they sweetly said
 'We toll a corpse out of the marriage bed?'
 The flowers upon my bridal chamber strewn
 Will serve unfaded for my bier—so soon
 That even the dying violet will not die
 Before Ginevra."

SHELLEY.

THE work proceeded till the day for the last sitting had arrived. For the first time since I had commenced the picture, I found Laura

alone. It was in all probability the last opportunity I should ever have of speaking to this woman, whom I had once looked upon as my betrothed, and who was still the idol of my soul. But owing to one of those strange impulses of perverseness to which the minds of lovers seem especially liable, I made no attempt to improve the occasion. I would not notice the decided change in her manner, the timid overtures she made towards some renewal of frank intercourse, and I appeared not to heed the information which she gave me, that no one would intrude upon us.

With a beating heart, I appeared calm and unmoved. I painted on doggedly, without varying the conventional manner I had adopted to her. I seldom spoke, except when I had some technical direction to give, and then I addressed her ceremoniously, as *Miss*. I had been painting for some time, hardly looking up from my canvass, when a long silence was abruptly broken, by the sound of

my own christian name, pronounced by the lips of Laura.

The low, deep, faltering utterance of that one word, startled me from my affected stoicism, and for an instant or two, I did not dare to look at Laura; when I did so, I saw that a great change had occurred. Every vestige of the demeanour she had assumed, in the presence of the Dowager and Lord Revel, had vanished, and the old natural manner, the old glance, the old smile, had returned. I beheld as far, as the outward semblance went, *my own Laura!* once more, notwithstanding the gentle tinge of melancholy, and the appealing expression which her features wore.

Reflection deadened the first joyful impulse. Laura had either been *acting* before, or was acting now. My hardness of heart returned. I would not be duped by a woman, who, (I thought) had deceived me, who was engaged to be married to another man. And I said,

with bitter coolness, "Thank you, Miss —— for that expression, it will assist me greatly in these finishing touches, if you can preserve it."

I bent my head down, and went on with my work, though with a somewhat unsteady hand. When I found the courage to look again, I found that Laura had quite disarranged her *pose*. She had turned her head aside, and covered her eyes with one hand, while the other was wandering nervously in search of her handkerchief.

No wonder she had some trouble in finding it. She was weeping. At first the big tears gushed silently from her eyes. By degrees her emotion could not be controlled. Her frame trembled in the effort to repress the sobs which rose from her labouring bosom. At length the storm of grief burst forth, and she wept hysterically. "Oh! Richard," was all she could articulate between the convulsions of her tears. To see the woman you love *weep*, and think that you are the cause! That

would vanquish a much sterner nature than mine. In an instant I was kneeling at the feet of Laura, and as my own frantic outburst of feelings long repressed increased, the violence of her grief somewhat abated.

"Hush, Richard, hush, for my sake. Oh! how guilty it makes me feel to see you moved like this. My poor, poor Richard, how cruelly I have used you. What must you think of me? Can you ever forgive me? Will you not hate me?"

"*Hate you!*" I could only repeat.

"Oh! Richard," she continued sobbing between every word, "have I indeed *acted* so well, as to deceive even *you*! Must I tell you; did not the instinct of love tell you that I accepted this false position—that I spoke cold words, to disarm all suspicion, as the only means by which we might meet alone before—Oh, God! oh, God! I feel as if my heart would break!"

My blood retreated and then rushed tumultuously back to my heart, as I heard the con-

fession, which let such a flood of light into my mind. How bitterly I had wronged Laura !

“Then,” I gasped when my power of utterance returned, “you are a victim, a sacrifice in this projected marriage? Your coldness, your indifference was but assumed in the presence of those people, of—of—*him*! To hide that—that—you love me still, Laura !”

For some instants I forgot everything in the joy of knowing that Laura still loved me. I folded her in my arms. I pressed my lips to hers. I experienced a strange wild hope that Lord Revel would enter then, and that we might decide by mortal strife, hand to hand, and foot to foot; who had the best title to Laura.

“But why,” I continued, “this inexplicable inconsistency of conduct? Why fulfil this engagement with one man, when your heart is another’s? It is not too late; at the eleventh

hour, fly with me from this tyranny—this fearful, needless sacrifice!”

I paused a moment for her reply, but she remained silent, and I resumed: “Laura, do you remember—you cannot forget—how in happier hours we agreed that the great essential to a happy union, was that love which alone is founded in a perfect sympathy, and congeniality, independent of all worldly distinctions and interested motives; that such love alone might hope to bid defiance to time, to smile upon death, and blossom and bloom in the unfading bowers of Paradise. You have not forgotten this? Have you then learned to think differently? Have your new associations changed your opinion so materially?”

She looked at me with an imploring, almost reproachful glance, and her lips syllabled the word, “cruel.”

“Your family,” I continued, “will disown you if you marry a younger son. Well, be it

so. If you must choose between your family and your lover, I ask, I implore—Laura—I will go further—I charge you by the memories of the past, by the kiss I have pressed on your lips, by your own admission of your love for me, to be *mine*. Do you doubt my love, or my ability to maintain you? Come to me, Laura, come to me. Why be a victim to the world which sooner or later all learn to despise?”

Long did Laura sob silently on my breast; at last, she spoke, as nearly as I can remember, these words :

“Pity me, Richard, pity me, but do not despise me. Only forget me as one not worthy of your devoted disinterested love. Oh! that we had never met, or that I had a firmer, more unbending nature. And yet I have struggled—ah! how I have struggled—to oppose my fate. What are we, but the creatures of circumstance, of destiny—puppets of a superior power which disposes of us in obedience to some fiat, (to whose object and

wisdom we are totally blind) and in supreme indifference to our hopes and wishes, woes and fears ! Do not speak as if I required interested inducements to love you. As you are, Richard, as you are, with no reference to, or speculation on, the future, or what you might become, if, to use the cant phrase, you achieve success ; for your own goodness and worth, your own nobility of nature and generosity of heart, for all your great qualities, I have loved and do love you. I could fly with you to the uttermost parts of the earth. I could be happy with you in a desert, a hut, a prison ! Were I alone, had I no ties, no duties, do you think I would hesitate a moment between this gilded slavery, these formal connections, and *you*. But there are ties of blood, long cherished and deeply embodied influences, which I want the courage and the power to break even for *you*. No, Richard, even to be yours, I dare not brave a *father's curse* ! Now you know why I have pledged myself to become the wife of Lord

Revel. You will not reproach me, dear, when you know that the only thought which consoles me, is, that the ceremony at the altar will be but the precursor of that at the *grave*. Yes, something tells me I shall not long be the wife of Lord Revel. Love is a flower which strives in vain to find fitting nourishment on earth! *Say you forgive me, Richard."*



I *saw* the woman I loved, and who loved me, married to another man. Oh! that such things can be in a land called christian and civilized! Every circumstance, the most minute detail of this ill-omened marriage burned itself indelibly into my memory. The careless, supercilious manner of Lord Revel; the beautiful bride, with her six bridesmaids, the mockery of the splendid dresses, and the wedding pomp by which they sought in vain to hide the grief and despair of two crushed

hearts. Laura, whose pale face presented hardly any contrast in colour to her robe of white satin, swayed to and fro as she stood before the altar, till I momentarily expected to see her fall on the floor of the church. In a faltering and inaudible voice she pronounced the vows which her heart did not sanction. All, all, could see the union was a mockery; yet they sanctioned it. At this moment I forgot the careful self-restraint I had hitherto imposed on myself. I pressed forward, unknowing what I did. Laura, whose gaze had been wandering restlessly round the church, saw and recognized me, in spite of the disguise I had assumed in mercy to her. The sacrifice was completed, and with a shriek of anguish and despair, she fell senseless into the arms of her bridesmaids.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SECOND STROKE OF FATE.

"If I had thought thou couldst have died,
I might not weep for thee :
But I forgot when by thy side,
That thou couldst mortal be."

WOLFE.

It would needlessly lengthen this record, were I to attempt to chronicle in detail, the events of the year and six months which elapsed between Laura's marriage and the catastrophe I am about to relate. Her warning at our last interview appeared destined to prove prophetic. Her heart remained irrevocably *mine*. Lord Revel made no attempt to conciliate her affections. Immediately after securing

the greater part of her fortune (a portion of which was invested under such restrictions that he could not touch it) he threw off the mask completely, and did not affect to conceal his indifference for Laura, and his contempt for her relatives. He plunged again into his career of dissipation, taking no pains to hide even the open scandal of his inconstancy, and anticipated any complaint which Laura might have made, but did not make, by taunting her continually with her love for me. *Poor suffering angel!*

Had Laura been like some women, she would have sought to banish in the license and frivolities of fashionable life, the difficulties and miseries of her position. Driven, in obedience to a conventional fatality, to violate the first true love of the heart, a woman finds a strong inducement to snap those fetters which she has rashly imposed on herself, the galling burthen of which she experiences *too late*. Such a woman argues plausibly, I committed a greater crime in marrying a man

I did not love than in violating such hollow oaths; the danger of the first departure from the path of sincerity and honor is thus glaringly evident.

But Laura could not act thus. Too pure to rally from the effects of a blow, which crushed at once self-esteem, hope, and love, there was no other resource for such a nature but—to *die*. Aye, to death, this noble woman looked as to a friend—a comforter—a refuge. To its dark waters, so much dreaded by the young, she looked to cleanse her spirit from the stain of an action which the sternest casuist could not call a fault.

The country seat of Lord Revel was near the sea—about two miles from the town in which Laura's family resided, and which for some time had been my home. I had acquired the habit of walking in the neighbourhood, of frequenting the green lanes, where sometimes by a rare chance I encountered Laura. Even when I did not see her, there was an undefinable pleasure in knowing I was

near her, in gazing upon the scenes which were associated with her, in catching a glimpse of the mansion in which she lived.

I saw her at long intervals, and each time I shuddered at the marked change wrought in her appearance. My beloved Laura! the delicate flower I would have tended so carefully, was drooping, withering, fading, dying. She had spoken truly. Her crushed affections torn from the congenial soil, could not survive the rude disruption. God help me! I, too, learned from adversity to emulate Laura in her sacrifice of self. Though at first with the natural instinct of a lover, I felt elated at Laura's constancy, when I saw the ravages which disease was making on that fair frame, I prayed sometimes that she might win health, even if it were at the price of her constancy, that Lord Revel might permit her to love him, that she might forget me *and live*.

How well I recollect my last interview with Laura, ere the event which altered the course of our destinies. It was on the sea-

shore, where we had so often wandered in our days of happiness and hope. It was one of those mild, balmy, summer mornings, when the minds of nearly all human beings are more or less affected by the sympathetic influence of the mighty mother—Nature. Laura was sitting at the foot of a cliff, and gazing sometimes out to sea, sometimes down on the fine white sand. The faint ripple made by the advancing tide was hardly audible. Oh, how did the memory of the *past* rise up, in agonizing contrast with the *present*. Not now was Laura walking lightly to and fro on the beach—not now did she stoop to gather the shells she used to prize—ah, no! she so young, and once so active, sat irresponsive to the quickening impulses of the sun, the sky, the ocean, wrapt in reverie, and listlessly drawing on the sand with the point of her parasol.

I approached silently. My foot-falls gave no sound, and Laura still went on with her occupation in ignorance of my presence. Guiding the parasol, with a hand which ill-

ness had rendered emaciated, feeble, and unsteady, Laura was tracing slowly, letter by letter, on the fine white sand, *my own name*. My eyes filled with tears, and a long and deep sigh escaped my labouring breast. She turned suddenly. Oh, that face, so wan and thin—those lips so colourless—those eyes so unnaturally bright, with their sad, earnest, gaze ! I staggered back, and hardly stifled a cry of despair, as I noticed the rapid progress made by the destroyer since I had last looked on that dear face.

I turned away. I had need of all my manhood. I dashed the moisture from my eyes. I made a strong effort to master my growing agitation. When I thought I had succeeded, I sat down beside her, and endeavoured to change the sad current of my thoughts by speaking cheerfully on different topics. But it would not do. On this very spot we had often sat together, and chatted and laughed. Here Laura had sung to me. Memory, and the sight of that face now, were too powerful

for me. My voice faltered, and fairly broke down at last. I sobbed aloud.

"Laura," I said, when the convulsion of grief permitted me to articulate, "Laura," you are very ill. Your hand is very hot. You ought not to be out. The air even on this mild day is too keen for you. Surely you have the best medical advice. Does the doctor sanction——"

She shook her head gently, as she replied solemnly :

"It is past that, dear Richard. The malady is beyond a doctor's skill. I shall soon be released from this life of misery, compromise, and shame !"

"Laura, Laura, you are not yet three and twenty. Do not break my heart. Do not speak or think of death. It must not, *shall not* be. Listen, Laura. I must speak at last. I must tell you of a plan I have formed, by which alone you can be saved. Suffering angel, what have you done that you should fall a sacrifice? Look out, Laura, on yonder sea;

see how every wave dances in the sunbeam, as if it could feel the joy which it imparts. Look at the swallows, Laura—listen to the birds, singing so sweetly in yonder trees. They are glad, they are happy. Oh! it is a bright world, and you shall live, Laura, and we shall yet be happy.

“Beyond that ocean, my beloved, there is a land, where we may begin life anew, with none to question, none to remind us of this bitter episode. Arouse your energies, Laura; break these forged fetters; spurn these unhal-
lowed vows. What claim has Lord Revel upon you? I would not willingly wrong even this man, but tell me, is he not acting as if it were his interest to break your heart? I know it—I know it; although your guileless mind has never conceived the possibility of such baseness. *The* WHOLE of your fortune will be his if you die! Laura, he grudges you your life, that he may spend the remnant, as he has spent the bulk, in pandering to his licentious pleasures. Laura, will you let this man

murder you? Your father is dead, and what do you owe to the members of your family, who tamely acquiesce in the usage you endure? There are two courses open to you, either to accompany me to America at once, or to appeal to the laws of your country, and legally free yourself from your present state of slavery. Your release is certain. Lord Revel's conduct has been too openly scandalous to leave any doubt as to the grounds of a divorce."

I went on heaping argument upon argument. Laura listened patiently, with the same gentle, pitying look, and then replied:

"You mean well, Richard, but if I could, or ought to listen to your proposal, there is one unconquerable obstacle——"

"And that?" I eagerly enquired.

"*That it is too late,*" she said, with great solemnity.

Once more I encountered in her large, lustrous eyes, the sad look, which told of no thoughts for herself, but only of pity for me.

“No, Richard; I need hardly attempt to persuade you that I am dying! I knew that you thought so, by the look of anguish, and your grief which you could not restrain. In the old, happy days,—they seem so long, long ago—when it was not sin to love you, death would then have been very hard. But mental grief and bodily weakness change our ideas of death. Believe me, dear Richard, I am reconciled. There is only one thought that makes it bitter, and that is—what will become of you *when I am gone!*”

While she was speaking, her thin, transparent fingers had been wandering among the curls of my hair. It was an old trick, to which she had recurred unconsciously. I was weeping like a child. How could my Laura talk so calmly of her approaching dissolution?

“Nay, dear boy,” she continued, using one of her old terms of fondness, “do not weep so, or you will make me weep too, and I want to be calm now especially. You must give me another of your curls, dear Richard. Look,

here is the one you gave me here the day I sang you, 'Shells of Ocean.' It has never left my heart since. There was no sin in that."

She took it from her bosom as she spoke, and held it close to my hair, so as to compare the two.

"You have a great many grey hairs now, Richard, and there is not one in this curl, and mine is turning just the same."

She pressed the curl to her lips, replaced it next her heart, and we both sat silent for a long time. Laura was the first to speak.

"I sometimes think I have done wrong; that I should have had more firmness, both for your sake and my own. But it is useless to regret now; I did all for the best—you believe that, Richard."

I assented with a gentle pressure of the hand, which I held locked in mine, and a fresh burst of grief.

"You will promise me then, dearest, when I am gone, not to mourn for me as one without hope, and never, never give way for a

moment to despair. Never indulge for an instant in thoughts which paint life as a cheerless pilgrimage. Remember that life is a sacred trust, which only He who gave has a right to resume! You will promise this for my sake. Thank you, dear, my heart is much lightened, for now we may indeed hope to meet again where we will never part. And now I have only one thing more to speak of. I may die very soon, or I may linger for some months, but I have made a request to Lord Revel, to which he has acceded. It is that I am to be laid, not in the family vault, but in the churchyard, where my father and mother are buried. You know the spot under the old yew tree. I like to think that the bright sun will shine on my grave, and that you will come there sometimes."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE THIRD STROKE OF FATE.

"Oh, God ! if it be thus, and Thou
Art not a madness and a mockery,
I yet might be most happy. I will clasp Thee,
And we again will be———

My heart is crushed."

BYRON.

ONE short week from this conversation, Laura was laid in the grave. So soon, so soon, my beloved ! My misery had made me restless. I found it impossible to pursue my professional avocations, or to remain for any length of time in one place. Not at all anticipating the suddenness of a fatal termination, for though it did seem impossible to me that she could recover, it appeared to me probable that she

would live several months longer (and she herself had told me that such was the opinion of her medical attendant), I had gone on a pedestrian excursion which had lasted for some days. I had indeed intended to have remained away longer, but I grew uneasy out of sight of the familiar scenes. So it came to pass at the end of a week, I approached, on my return to T——, the burial ground spoken of by Laura.

It was a picturesque spot on the slope of the mountain. I felt a desire to look upon the spot which Laura had chosen for her last resting place. I started when I beheld under the old yew tree a fresh dug grave; a sickening apprehension arose in my mind, which I strove to banish in vain. With a faltering voice, I asked the old grave-digger, who was shouldering his mattock and spade, preparatory to taking his departure, "Who was dead?"

"Lord bless my soul, sir," he replied, "where have you been not to know that Lady Revel died on Tuesday? She's to be buried

this afternoon at five o'clock. They say she took a fancy to lie here beside her own kith and kin, and not in the grand family vault belonging to the Hall. My old woman thinks it odd; I can't say as I do. It's precious little matter where they put us after the breath is out of our bodies. Give me a grass-grown grave afore any of their dark dismal vaults. But it's the way of rich and great folks, sir; they pretend to believe what the parson tells 'em in church about all being equal, but to my thinkin' they would gladly keep up differences after death as they do in life. A rich man don't want his body to moulder side by side with the poor—not he! They say my lady and my lord didn't agree well. Well—well—it's none of my business, she were a sweet soul. Take care, sir, you was nearly into the grave. Feel faintish, sir; it's mortal hot to be sure. Good day to you, sir."

I listened to the man, I heard distinctly every word. I tried to fancy it was all a dream. Then I felt stunned and giddy;

a mist swam before my eyes. I sat down and tried to think, tried to analyze the intelligence I had just received, but my mind had not the power of concentration. A chaos of ideas whirled through my brain, as I gazed with tearless eyes on the calm sparkling sea, the bright sunshine flecking the grass, or listened to the chirp of grasshoppers, or the singing of birds. My senses seemed peculiarly on the alert to note all the sights and sounds of brisk summer life. Then, ever and anon, memory would bring a heavy clinging, crushing weight down upon my heart, in the conviction, slowly shaping itself into a fact, that Laura was dead.

Death, let it be ever so long expected, always takes the mourner by surprise. But in this case the actual suddenness of the thing itself, and the abrupt manner in which I had learnt it, seemed to render it impossible. On that bright summer day, how could Laura, with whom I had conversed only that day week, lie calm, cold, and stiff. I thought of

her as a child, as she grew up, budding into girlhood, expanding into womanhood. A thousand reminiscences thronged my memory of Laura, young, gay, playing, singing, laughing, dancing; always of Laura, full of life and health; words, looks, gestures, whole scenes and chains of events long forgotten, came back fresh, vivid as things of yesterday. I ran over all our intercourse down to our last interview, when she had looked so ill and pale, and spoken of death; but oh, how far from death! Now what an awful gulf had opened between me and those recollections, in those words which told me that Lady Revel was dead!

Hours passed away. The sun, which had been vertical, now cast a long shadow behind me, as I still sat puzzling and thinking, trying to comprehend how my Laura could be dead. I was roused from my reverie by the funeral train. This made it seem stranger still, that the young and beautiful girl I had loved, my Laura whose voice was yet lingering in my ears, should really be in that narrow box

covered with a pall, and borne on men's shoulders. They stopped at the grave, the bearers set down their load, the mourners—(who mourned her like me?)—clustered round, and after some delay, in which I knew the coffin was being lowered into the ground, all heads were uncovered and the burial service began. At the words, "*Ashes to ashes, dust to dust,*" I heard the gravel from the spade of the sexton rattle on the coffin lid.

The service came to an end, and the gravedigger and his assistants began shoveling in the mould. I watched them at their task till the last loiterer had departed. Lord Revel had gone immediately after the close of the burial service. The brother of Laura was on the continent, and unable to return in time for the interment. I observed with curious interest every little detail of filling up and sodding the grave, till the last pat of the spade had been given; and the men, shouldering their tools, withdrew, and I was left alone with—THE GRAVE!"

Did I weep? No—this was my misery. I tried to think that Laura was really there. Oh! had I been with her when she died, had it been my privilege to have tended her in her hour of agony, to have held her in my arms, and caught the last look of those eyes which hireling hands had closed; to have sat beside the clay of my beloved after “the first dark day of nothingness!”

Suddenly the idea darted into my brain—“Why should you not see Laura again? why should you, the only real mourner at her grave, be debarred from kissing for the last time her lips? Why should not your hand sever from her head the beautiful tresses—then, then, you will be able to weep?” The idea mastered me; the thought of executing it produced in my mind a strange wild feeling of expectancy, not without a sense of consolation.

I, who had been for hours helplessly incapable of movement, now started to my feet with every nerve strung to action. I hastened

to T—— and sought out an intimate friend, a young medical man, whom I conceived the most suitable person to aid me. After exacting a solemn promise of secrecy, I made him my confidant and claimed his assistance. He made some faint attempts at first to divert me from my purpose, but finding me resolute, he yielded his cordial co-operation. As soon after night-fall as we judged expedient, we set out with all the necessary implements, arrived at the grave and began our task. It was by no means the first time my friend had been similarly employed, and he was consequently skilful in the use of the spade. I worked under a degree of excitement which made up for the want of experience; and as the soil was light and the grave not deep, we very soon arrived at the coffin. Our joint strength sufficed to raise and deposit it on the grass, a few feet from the grave, and then we began to detach the screws.

When we arrived at the inner coffin, my hands began to tremble. Hitherto I had

laboured with a concentrated energy, produced by the hope of beholding the familiar features of her I loved. But now that in a few moments I was to look upon what had once been Laura, strange thoughts assailed me, making me shrink and pause. What dread secrets might not the grave disclose! If Laura should be changed—so changed that I should not know her! I had heard of such things. If the first sight of her remains should inspire me with an involuntary thrill of terror and aversion—that indescribable, superstitious horror which we associate with the shroud, corruption, the worm!

My companion saw my agitation, and addressed me; “My dear friend,” he said “this trial is too much for you; would it not be better to let the dead rest?”

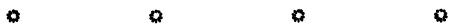
“No,” I replied, “I will go through with it;” and I made a strong effort to master my emotion, but my hands shook too violently for me to use the implement I held.

"At least," replied my friend, "retire and calm your nerves while I detach the screws which yet remain."

I followed his injunction mechanically, and walked several paces from the grave, trying to steel my nerves for the shock awaiting them; little anticipating the nature of that shock. Thus I remained for some time, taking off my hat so that the night-breeze might cool my fevered brow. The silence was broken by an exclamation from my friend, which sounded like "my God!" and then all was still. I attributed the ejaculation to emotion at the first sight of Laura's remains. I waited for some time wondering why he did not come or call to me. Was the sight too dreadful. Any certainty was preferable to this horrible suspense. Just as I was on the point of returning, I beheld my friend advancing towards me. The light of the lantern flashed on a face perfectly colorless, and he staggered like a drunken man.

When he attempted to speak, he was unable, and we gazed upon each other in silence that was terribly significant. At length I gasped out the words "Speak, for God's sake." Looking over his shoulder, as if he feared something was following him, he exclaimed, as his teeth chattered with fright, "Come away, come away. God have mercy upon me, it's coming!" he attempted to move from the spot, but stumbled and fell over a grave.

The blood froze in my veins as I beheld a white shrouded figure moving towards me. For one instant the superstitious teachings of childhood prevailed, and I thought I saw the spirit of Laura. But the next, the truth flashed upon me—they had buried her in a cataleptic trance !



O Laura, Laura, thy words were prophetic!
Though I had brought thee back even
from the border of the dark valley of the

shadow of death, I could not keep thee. The shock was too great, and how could I desire to preserve the form, when the light of reason had fled. But I had my wish—thy last looks were bent on me, and my hand closed thine eyes.



CHAPTER XV.

NEW YORK.

Cœlum, non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt.

HORACE.

A LONG and severe fit of illness had been followed by a convalescence lingering and partial. So prostrated were mind and body, that fears were entertained for my reason as well as life. A sea voyage was recommended, and as I had some friends in Canada, I resolved to visit America. Though I had to be carried on board the steamer at Liverpool, such was the marvellous effect of the pure uncontaminated ocean atmosphere, that I walked ashore at Boston comparatively well.

Once more in memory I am approaching New York, in one of those splendid steamers which navigate the Sound, and which I must still denominate by the hackneyed term of "floating palaces." "*Tall* boats and no mistake," as a Yankee fellow-passenger remarked in assent to my panegyric. Gradually the channel contracts from a broad estuary to the limits of a river, bounded on the right by Manhattan Island, on which the city of New York is built, and on the left by the shores of Long Island. We glide rapidly on between banks covered with luxurious vegetation, and dotted by beautiful villas, until the dangerous rapids of Hell Gate being passed, the cities of Williamsburg and Brooklyn arise on the left, and that of New York on the right.

A succession of striking views fills up the eye, till the steamer sweeps round the battery (a pleasant grove or park at the southern or lower extremity of the city, taking its name from an esplanade, which would doubtless form an efficient battery if there were any

guns), and comes to her destined wharf in the Hudson or North River, having thus made two-thirds of the circuit of the town.

The atmosphere is generally clear and bright, the sky presenting a deep blue never seen in England, and there is little or no smoke or fog to obscure the effect which must be produced on every stranger by this beautiful and imposing city, with its bright red brick houses relieved by green window blinds, and in many instances marble porticoes, and its long avenues of trees shading the streets in the upper part of the town.

As we approached nearer, however, we could discern a dense column of smoke, which announced that one of those fires, so frequent in New York, was now raging. I was somewhat struck with the slight degree of interest manifested in the conflagration by my fellow-passengers; a national trait exactly opposite to that of my countrymen. Indeed those around me seemed as much astonished at my interest as I was at their apathy.

One man, after a fearful yawn, which threatened to dislocate his jaws, and a corresponding muscular movement of his body, which seemed to express his strong disgust with the world and everything in it, condescended to speak at length in a tone wholly devoid of animation or sympathy.

“I reckon that ’ere fire ain’t fur off Peckslip Ferry.”

His neighbour scanned the volume of smoke for sometime in silence, and then said, with a glorious disregard of grammatical accuracy, which made me smile—

“You am right, you am right, and no mistake.”

“It’s pretty considerable of a blaze tew—I’m blamed if it arn’t,” continued the first.

“You am right, you am right; ’tain’t nothin’ else, no, sirree,” replied the second.

“But,” said I, “is there not danger to life, to sick people, women and children—”

The first speaker examined me sometime in silence; and just when I was in doubt whe-

ther to laugh or grow angry at this surveillance, he said—

“I guess you be a stranger to New York city, or you’d know there ain’t nothin but stores and warehouses so fur down town.”

Having satisfied himself that he was correct in this statement, the individual so far shook off his apathy as voluntarily to assume the office of grand inquisitor, and employed the short remainder of the voyage in cross-questioning me as to my country, my name, my business, my object in coming to America, New York, &c., so that by the time we had reached the wharf, he had thoroughly sifted me.

Within half an hour after landing, I was, with two or three travelling acquaintances, with whom I had fraternized on the voyage, set down at one of the mammoth hotels, overlooking the Park, which, though only one-third as large as the Green Park, in London, is rendered imposing by the City Hall rising within, in all the dignity of white marble.

One of my fellow-travellers named Gabye, had especially interested me. He was a tall, strapping, broad-shouldered young man, about nineteen, fresh from the maternal wing, and all the tender associations of aunts, cousins, and sweethearts, in a little village; an excellent specimen of the raw material of the British North American provinces. Being exceedingly frank and unreserved, I soon learned from him that he was ready to undertake any honest labor, and hoped by attention and perseverance to rise from the situation of porter to the position of clerk. Doubtless, though he went no further in words, his castle building did not stop here, and in his visionary pictures of the future, he most probably beheld himself the portly partner in some flourishing business!

At Boston, poor Gabye had got his first lesson in experience of the stern world. He had gone out to make enquiries relative to a situation, and as he had neither letters of introduction, nor friends, it is needless to say

his applications were uniformly unsuccessful. This first disappointment, this first peep at the hard realities of life, considerably damped his ardour and his expectations, and he spoke with much less confidence than before.

But if Boston had made him feel uncomfortable from the striking contrast it presented to the quiet of his native hamlet, the reader may imagine the effect of gay, bustling New York on the unsophisticated mind of Gabye, who complained that "every one gave him a shove in passing."

The hotel was so full, the bar-keeper informed us, that it was for the present impossible to offer us separate rooms, but if we liked, as we seemed acquainted with each other, we could occupy for a night or two, one large room containing a bed for each. To this arrangement we assented, not caring to change our hotel until we could provide ourselves with boarding houses.

The hotel appeared to me then the finest building of the sort that could possibly be,

though it was in reality only fourth, or fifth-rate. The floor was of tessellated stone, but shockingly disfigured by the blotches of expectoration, and ends of cigars which were strewn lavishly over it, as if in contempt of the numerous spittoons scattered about in every direction. These spittoons from their large size, and also from their claim to public attention, not hiding themselves modestly in corners as in British hotels, but occupying prominent positions, as if conscious of their own importance, seemed one of the most peculiar and cherished institutions of the modern republic. The manufacture of spittoons must be a flourishing trade in the United states. As an illustration of the elegance and taste sometimes displayed in their formation, the following anecdote is told, which, though well-known in America may be new to many of my readers:—It appears that the famous Colonel Crocket was once dining in a gentleman's house, in Virginia. After dinner, the Colonel, who hailed from the backwoods, and

had never seen a spittoon in his life, was more liberal of tobacco-juice than the host or hostess thought beneficial to the carpet. At a sign from the gentleman, a slave brought what seemed a costly porcelain vase, and placed it near the colonel, who faced round and spat in another direction. The slave immediately removed the vase to that side, and the colonel again spat in the very opposite direction. These manœuvres were repeated, till the colonel losing all patience exclaimed: "Tell ye what it is, Sambó, if you don't take that 'ere new fashioned butter-cooler out of my way I am darn'd if I don't spit in it!"

I was busy dividing my attention between the concoction of a parody on Byron's beautiful opening stanzas from the *Bride of Abydos*, which are borrowed from his great co-temporary Goethe,* of which I had got as far as two lines

"Know ye the land where the spittoon and bowie,
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime!"

* Kennst du das Land wo die Citronen blühen.

and an occasional calculation as to how long two men near me could refrain from spitting, when a respectable looking individual whom I had already noted, from the remarkable fact, that he did not expectorate more than once in ten minutes, and then, did not shoot his saliva right and left with reckless indifference, but made use of the spittoon, addressed me politely to the effect, that he saw I was a stranger and would feel gratified if I would "liquor" with him.

On my signifying my intention to do so, and desiring to know which of the celebrated American drinks he could recommend, he perfectly overwhelmed my unsophisticated mind, with the host of names which he poured forth, of which the following were a few :—sherry-cobbler, gin-sling, whisky-skin, brandy-smash, cock-tail, mint-julip, apple jack, white nose, stone-wall, chain-lightning, railroad, switchel-flip, &c., &c.

Having decided on the far-famed sherry-cobbler, and the hospitable stranger having

provided himself with a similar beverage, we both gravely proceeded to suck up the delicious mixture through straws, or reeds (in the grand hotels they give you glass tubes); my companion catechising me (though politely), as to how I liked New York, and America generally. This is the second question generally put to strangers. The first being, "What will you take to drink?" It is astonishing how men slide into acquaintance over a glass. May not one great reason of the great superiority of men to women in friendship be ascribed to this—that they drink together. It is true women drink tea together, and that is a beverage, which I by no means despise, but, who could grow confidential over a cup of tea with its concomitants of bread and butter, whereas the man whose generous sentiments do not expand with wine,—the man, who does not begin to talk about his love affairs to his intimate friend over his second tumbler of punch, may be confidentially pronounced to have a bad heart.

My new acquaintance proved very entertaining, and went on enlightening me as to the manners and customs of his country, mingled with occasional questions as to whether I thought England or America the greater nation? Whether the English or the American women were the prettiest? Whether there were as many omnibuses in London as in New York? and sundry other queries. On the whole, however, he showed a zealous wish to make me think well of his native land, which, though droll, was not unbecoming.

“There,” said he, pointing out into the street, “yonder woman lifts the skirts of her dress higher than is necessary, but don’t fancy that all our ladies do so on that account, or put down in your diary that all American women are immodest from the same brief experience as that of the Frenchman, who after passing two days in Portsmouth, and observing gaily dressed women continually entering public houses, wrote, ‘English ladies like very much gin!’ ”

Amongst some very amusing anecdotes told me by this personage, I select the following, as no bad specimen of that almost oriental exaggeration which forms so marked a characteristic of American humour. The speaker is a 'cute yankee, vaunting the wonderful power of growth of some pumpkin seed, which he has for sale:—"I guess, stranger, the only fault you'll hev to find with them ere seeds is, they grow too fast. Only jest listen what happened when I planted some last summer? I put them in the ground, and then I cleared about the quickest, but it wan't no use; I hadn't got ten rods afore they caught me, and twisted all round me. Wall, I put my hand into my pocket to pull out my jack-knife to cut away the darn'd things, and what do you think I found there, stranger? Can you guess? No! Well, then. Blamed if I didn't find in my top-coat pocket, a great seed cow-cumber."

We had been talking together for about two hours, when I became aware of a strange

bustle and confusion going on around us, the cause of which I could not divine. My agreeable acquaintance appeared to become infected, for his manner changed; he grew restless and uneasy, and finishing his cobbler in haste, left abruptly—a proceeding which I knew not how to reconcile, with his previous politeness. I turned towards the two men, who had formerly attracted my attention. They had hitherto been sitting in a careless, lounging posture, with their chairs tilted backwards, and their feet elevated considerably above their heads, and resting on the window-sill, thus exposing the soles of their boot to the gaze of all spectators who might be curious in such matters. Assuredly a similar exhibition in a public thoroughfare at London or Paris, would have attracted a crowd, but here in New York the fashion seemed too common for anyone to notice it.*

* Contrary to our English customs, in American hotels, the smoking-room is one of the pleasantest and most accessible rooms in the house.

These two men, who had hitherto given no sign of life, save an amiable rivalry as to who could spit oftenest, suddenly ceased their "playful and incessant shower of expectoration," allowed their feet to come into contact with the floor, and assumed an attitude of eager, keen attention, quite at variance with their previous collapsed state. I observed that they looked fixedly at the clock, which indicated the hour of two p.m., while each jostled the other sportively with his elbow. Hardly had I time to form any conjectures as to this remarkable conduct, when the most jarring and detestable sound I had ever heard, burst upon my ears, increasing in violence until it gradually culminated in a harsh discordant crash. Scarcely had it commenced, when the two men started from their chairs, which were overturned by the shock, and made wildly for a door which had just been thrown open, and towards which people were hurrying in every direction.

I turned mechanically to my companion for

an explanation of these mysteries, but, as I have said, he had vanished, and I just caught a glimpse of him disappearing through the doorway, fighting valiantly, and holding his ground manfully against a press of legs, arms, shoulders, hats, dress-coats, &c., &c., all wedged mysteriously and inextricably together.

“What in the name of all that is wonderful is the matter?”

“I guess,” replied the bar keeper, “it’s dinner time.”

“And what was that infernal sound I heard just now?”

“Oh, that was a gong,” replied the man laughing.

In the middle of the night we were roused from slumber by a terrific noise and confusion in the street, as if the city had been taken by storm. The bell of the city hall, quite close to us, had tolled a certain number of strokes, to indicate the ward in which the fire was raging, and the engines were now thundering

past, not drawn by horses, as with us in London, but dragged, pushed, and followed by crowds of men forming the fire brigade, recruited out of a class technically termed the "bhoys," all shouting, yelling, and scampering, as if bent on a frolic rather than on an arduous duty in which life and limb were freely to be ventured; for there are no more daring firemen in the world than at New York. Before I had been in the city two days I had counted five similar alarms, and ere a month was past, I had begun to look upon it quite as one of the institutions of the country, and was often lulled to sleep by the music of the fire-bell. It is often said, as illustrative of the well known indifference of New Yorkers to fire, that the inmates of a house near a conflagration, never think of moving till they feel the walls growing hot.

The next day I was occupied in seeing the lions, and also in looking out for a boarding-house. When I returned in the evening I found my luggage alone in the big room. All

my travelling companions had gone. On descending to the bar, however, I met one of them, who informed me that Gabye had gone back to his village in Nova Scotia. He had peeped out on the world, and drawn back in dismay at finding it so much larger, so much more bustling and uncongenial than he had expected. He was fairly frightened out of New York, "where every one gave him a shove in passing." The crowds, the noise, the hurry, the absence of the old familiar faces, had been too much for the poor friendless young countryman. Such had been his haste to get out of the Western Babylon, that he had actually left his hat behind him.

Laugh gentle reader, but do not scorn him until you have been placed in a similar situation. Be assured it will tax all your philosophy. I afterwards met Gabye under very different circumstances. In the next chapter I will give my experience of a *New York Boarding-house*.

CHAPTER XVI.

A NEW YORK BOARDING-HOUSE.

These are my companions.

ADDISON.

THE boarding-house in which, following the custom of the country, I had '*located*' myself, merits a description. The New York system of boarding has many advantages and disadvantages. It is a cheap method of living, affords opportunities of seeing character, and offers a home to a young bachelor. There is plenty of female society, with music, and dancing—amusements, which however frivolous in themselves, are certainly preferable to brandy and water, and billiards.

Much of course depends on the fashion of the house, for board may be obtained from three up to ten dollars per week. When you are fortunate enough to meet with congenial people it is on the whole agreeable; on the other hand, it is a severe penance to breakfast and dine daily with those who have no ideas or tastes in common with yourself. As far as young ladies are concerned, it certainly does tend to do away with those retiring habits which are inculcated and fostered in a well-governed domestic circle; although it is equally true that under certain conditions the freedom of communion between the two sexes characteristic of American society, is productive of good rather than evil.

Mrs. Penton, the lady of the house at which I boarded in Third Avenue, was a singular little woman. She spoke French fluently, had received a tolerable education, and was a curious mixture of shrewdness and credulity. The latter quality she carried to such excess as to believe any story, no matter how impro-

bable, which was told with a grave face. This feature of her character was practised on to the utmost by a humorous gentleman named Joyce, who seemed to dedicate all his energies to the task of disturbing Mrs. Penton's peace of mind. Whatever practical joke took place, and of these there was a continual recurrence, Mr. Joyce was sure to be at the bottom of it.

One day, for instance, all the bells in the house would be set ringing by some mysterious agency. Servants were flying about in all directions, from basement to attic, and returning with blank countenances to say that none of the boarders had rung. I encountered Mrs. Penton on the stairs in a state of great anguish and dismay. She enquired if I had rung, and on receiving a reply in the negative, I heard her say, "I know Mr. Joyce is at the bottom of this." As it was just at the time of the celebrated Rochester knockings it was however evident to me that Mrs. Penton was divided between this idea and her belief in supernatural agency. *There were*

*as many fools duped by knaves then as there are now, through the medium of the spirit-rappers.**

Mr. Joyce made a great capital of fun out of the Rochester knockings. What I admired

* If the intellectual enlightenment of the nineteenth century be insufficient to stem the tide of morbid curiosity, which leads people to be imposed on by *spirit-rapping* (so called), I would appeal to the moral and religious sentiments, which are in the greater majority, stronger than the purely thinking principle. Surely those who have lost dear friends or relatives, should hesitate before exposing such sacred names to a circle of strangers, or even to one stranger. I myself have no faith whatever in supernatural visitants, but if I had, I should never degrade the holy associations which embalm the memory of the departed by submitting the names of such to any *medium*! They say everyone is more or less superstitious. But it would be well if persons, not devoid of common sense, before permitting their judgments to be lulled asleep by their imaginations, would consider the puerile and insignificant results which attend these spirit manifestations. "Do you dare to insult my intellect, by asking me to believe that the soul would leave the realms of Eternity to talk such wretched rubbish as this?" was my reply to a person half-dupe, half-imposter, who showed me a pamphlet purporting to be a conversation with the spirit of the Duke of York! Note this, that charlatans are very fond of invoking the spirits of those who have occupied a high position in life. If we could imagine a disembodied spirit returning to earth, the questions asked would concern those sublime and awful themes respecting man's eternal welfare, not the petty temporal interests of private individuals. Why this restless impatience of natural limitations, this morbid curiosity to pry into the mysteries of Infinity? Every mortal will one day learn the great secret. Is it so long to wait till the time appointed for each by Divine Wisdom, when the veil of futurity shall be raised. We may rest assured that our present ignorance is merciful to us.

"Hope humbly then, with trembling pinions soar,
Wait the great teacher—Death, and God adore."

principally was the consummate command he maintained over his muscles. Very few jokers can prevent a twitching at the corners of the mouth, or a twinkle in the eye betraying them to a keen observer, but Mr. Joyce's countenance presented a delightful stolidity, which might have deceived a more incredulous person than Mrs. Penton. He rebutted the charge of being in any way accessory to the bell ringing in a very serious manner, and seemed very much hurt and indignant at being suspected.

“ My dear Madam, you hurt my feelings, indeed you do, by insinuating that I would play off a practical joke. What interest could I have in doing so, even if it were possible in this instance? I give you my word, I have not stirred from this room. You must remember, my dear Mrs. Penton, we live in a very wonderful age; there are many more things in heaven and earth, than are dreamt of in our philosophy, as the Bishop of Oxford very beautifully remarks. I am myself of a credulous disposition, and do not like to sneer

at some things as impossibilities. I have heard of certain houses, where *brownies*, fairies, you know, ma'am, turned everything topsy-turvy, where furniture moved without being touched, where the tables butted at you, and where the dishes actually danced quadrilles and hornpipes on the dresser, of their own accord. I remember an instance, myself, where a large dish actually jumped off the table, and was smashed to pieces on the floor, without the cat having anything to do with it. I have known, my dear Madam, still more curious facts."

"Will you come into the kitchen with me, Mr. Joyce," interrupted Mrs. Penton.

"Certainly, my dear Madam, with the utmost pleasure. I will afford you all the assistance in my power, to sift to the bottom, this extraordinary and perplexing affair, which alarms and confounds me quite as much as yourself."

Mr. Joyce accompanied Mrs. Penton into the kitchen, where all the bells hung, and at

that moment, they all rang together, a deafening peal. The wires communicating with the different apartments, all passed through the room we had just quitted, in the basement story, and any person, by standing on a chair or sofa, could produce the startling effect described, which a woman, more gifted with *causality* than Mrs. Penton, might have divined. In this instance, they were pulled by another boarder, to whom Mr. Joyce had tipped the wink on going out.

During dinner, Mr. Joyce would lead the conversation to the Rochester knockings, and having enlarged upon the subject sufficiently to excite Mrs. Penton's superstitious fears, he would pretend to be himself greatly alarmed, and suddenly exclaim, with a start, "Good gracious, what was that?" as a confederate gave three distinct raps under the table, with a cane secreted for the purpose. This never failed to produce a galvanized movement, or an ejaculation from Mrs. Penton, followed by a smile at her own credulity.

Hardly a day passed without Mr. Joyce bringing home a tale, either of the horrible, or the miraculous, to entertain Mrs. Penton with, during dinner, and the exquisite gravity with which he told these stories, made it a severe trial to restrain one's risible emotions.

He would begin in the most innocent manner, as follows :

"I presume you have heard of that extraordinary affair which has created such a sensation in town to-day."

Mrs. Penton pauses with uplifted fork, and says, "No."

"Dear me, how odd. I thought every one knew it by this time. Well then, not to make a long story, the facts are simply these : A vessel laden with gunpowder, from the Mompos Islands—you know where the Mompos Islands are, of course?"

Mrs. Penton, who has not heard of the Mompos Islands before, shakes her head, her curiosity too much aroused for speech.

"Strange," said Mr. Joyce, "Never heard

of the Mompos Islands? I thought every body had heard of the Mompos Islands, situated in the Caribbean Sea, lying between the fifteenth and seventeenth degree of north latitude. Well, ma'am, the authorities would not permit a vessel laden with so combustible an article as, of course, you are aware, gunpowder is, to pass without performing quarantine! This the captain flatly refuses to do. Now what do you think the villain threatens to do, if he is not allowed to pass?"

Here Mr. Joyce paused, giving his audience an opportunity of appreciating the blending of curiosity and horror in Mrs. Penton's features, as she exclaimed, "Law, do tell."

"Why, ma'am," Mr. Joyce continued, with the same stolid gravity as before, "The cold-blooded, daring villain, threatens to cut his cable, fire upon Castle Gardon, drift in among the shipping in the North River, and then set fire to the powder magazine!"

The open-mouthed awe with which Mrs. Penton heard the dénouement of this frightful

history, was a little too much for the gravity of the assembled party, who had hitherto, by violent coughing, and other shifts, suppressed their risibility. The roar of mirth, which convulsed the table, was the first intimation to Mrs. Penton, that she had been once more *severely sold*, and she resumed her knife and fork, saying, with naïveté, "A vessel laden with gunpowder, from the Mompos Islands—Oh! you're joking!"

There was another character,—an old gentleman, named Hobbie, who also contributed, generously, to the merriment of the party, by the gravity with which he frequently assured the company, that he had broken every bone in his body, except his neck and his little finger. These numerous fractures, according to his account, had been the consequence of repeated falls; and it certainly was an effort to keep one's gravity, as the old gentleman, remarkably tall, straight, and healthy, for his age, and with nothing to show for all these frightful fractures, but one crooked finger,

gave a circumstantial account of how *he broke his back!* and was cured solely by the watchful care and attention of his wife—a lady with the remains of beauty, who sat and listened to her lord's relations of moving accidents, by flood and field, of bones broken and dislocated, which nothing but the rack could have inflicted, and which no mortal frame could have survived. Probably from long continued repetition of the same stories, her sense of the ludicrous was deadened, or she had caught her husband's faith in their truth.

Mr. Hobbie was of no profession, and described himself as devoted to science, (although, I fear the scientific world was guilty of ignoring his existence,) and believed himself a philosopher of no mean pretensions. He was constantly making experiments with retorts, and detonating mixtures, which resulted in terrific explosions, occurring at unseasonable hours of the night. He believed himself always on the verge of discovering

something for which he was to take out a patent, and make his fortune.

One day he introduced at the dinner-table (and insisted on the company drinking two bottles of it) something he called his "beverage," an invention of his own, which tasted like indifferent beer, but which he affirmed had all the exhilarating properties of champagne with this remarkable advantage, that it was entirely free from intoxicating qualities. This remarkable discovery was to become the principal drink of the sons of temperance, and to bring great fame and wealth to its originator.

The conversation turning on the question whether alcoholic stimulants assisted or retarded mental operations, elicited the fact that this whimsical old gentleman had not been always averse to potations free from intoxicating qualities. As testimony to the efficacy of brandy in assisting the reflective faculties, when taken on an empty stomach, he told the following anecdote :

"I once," he said, "solved a problem which puzzled the cleverest mathematicians in the Union, and I attribute my success entirely to the assistance I received from alcoholic stimulants while fasting from solid food."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Joyce, conveying into his tone and look the most veritable curiosity, "that is a very remarkable circumstance; pray how did you achieve it?"

"This is the way I did it," continued Mr. Hobbie. "I concluded to try the plan of starving myself, in order to make my intellect keener, while I was calculating. I ate no breakfast, but I took a stiff glass of brandy and water. I then went out into the fields and calculated. At dinner-time, I ate nothing, but I took another stiff tumbler of brandy and water, and then went out into the fields again, and set to calculating harder than ever."

"May I enquire if you felt no tendency to slumber?" enquired Mr. Joyce in the most innocent manner possible.

“Not in the least,” returned Mr. Hobbie, who took the question in good earnest.

“Beg your pardon for interrupting you, pray go on. This is extremely interesting,” said Mr. Joyce, looking round the table with the most provoking calmness.

“At night,” continued Mr. Hobbie, “I ate nothing, but I took another drink.”

“Another stiff tumbler of brandy and water?” said Mr. Joyce enquiringly.

“Yes. On the following day I pursued the same plan, neither eating nor sleeping, but walking in the fields, thinking, and recruiting my faculties, and keeping up my strength by stiff tumblers of brandy and water at meal times. So on, till the evening of the third day. Now what do you think happened then?”

“You were found under a hedge insensible!” said Mr. Joyce in the most innocent manner possible. Pocket handkerchiefs were stuffed into mouths, and people moved uneasily in their chairs in the vain attempt to

repress stifled laughter. Two individuals, alone remained perfectly calm. The admirable Mr. Joyce and Mr. Hobbie, who was as impervious to a sense of the ludicrous as a Scotchman.

"No," he continued, "I was not found under a hedge insensible. On the evening of the third day, the solution of that problem which had puzzled the cleverest mathematicians of the union, darted into my head like lightning. 'Eureka!' I exclaimed, and started for home about the quickest. I committed the solution to paper, took another stiff tumbler of brandy and water, and went to bed."

"Well," said Mr. Joyce with an appearance of great simplicity, "I think it was time to go," an observation which acted like a safety-valve, and perhaps prevented fatal consequences, by enabling us with some show of decorum to get rid of our bottled-up merri-ment.

I may incidentally mention that I saw here

for the first time in my life, a slave, a female domestic belonging to a gentleman from the south, who made a temporary stay at our boarding-house. She was the fattest, jolliest looking woman I ever saw. Her master told me that when he came to live in New York, he offered Dinah her liberty, and that she laughed at the idea. In fact, liberty for her might have been misery or starvation. She seemed perfectly contented and happy. When any of the volunteer troops passed with music, she would stand at the window, and clap her hands with glee, and ask, "When dey come again, Massa?"

My limits are nearly reached, and I find I have ungallantly left the lady-boarders to the last. A brief description must suffice. There was a handsome young widow, whose person was evidently a great deal more adorned than her mind. She had a little boy in whom she seemed to take an occasional interest and pride, when he was brought into the drawing-room dressed up like a puppet

to gratify the vanity of the mother, by eliciting indirect compliments to her beauty. One evening when she had to leave a waltz, because little Harry had woke suddenly and cried for his "Ma," I over-heard a remark which seemed to me tolerably significant as to Mrs. Lacquer's character: "Children are sad plagues. After all they are much better in heaven."

There were a Mr. and Mrs. Naylor, with two grown-up daughters, who did their best to keep me and a handsome travelled young American at home in the evenings, by the display of their musical accomplishments. The younger one was the prettiest, but she talked sad nonsense. As a specimen of her table-talk, I heard her say to the young American: "Oh! Mr. S——, how handsome you are! You are so handsome I should like to eat you!" About the elder sister I could see nothing particularly attractive, till one day, she came down to dinner dressed for the opera. It was the first time I had seen her *en*

grande toilette, and my searching eye immediately discovered a beauty, of which till then I had been quite unconscious.

This beauty was—her arms. Oh! ye Gods, what lovely arms she had! white as ivory, and in their beautifully developed roundness, worthy of being modelled for the statue of a Greek Nymph. I took the earliest opportunity of conveying to Miss Naylor my conviction on this point. We got up a pretty little flirtation on the strength of it, and from that time forth she always appeared at dinner in a dress with short sleeves.

The reader may here reflect on Lady Wortley Montague's theory, that in England and western Europe generally, we attach undue importance to a handsome face, undervaluing the hands, arms, feet, and figure generally.

There was a tall, lanky, yankee lady, that is, a new Englander, the most remarkable specimen of unsociability I ever met with. She sat by the fireside in winter, by the open window in summer, all day long, swaying

backwards and forwards in a rocking chair, and looking like an ingenious piece of mechanism, which had been manufactured at a toy-maker's. She never read, she never worked, she never talked, at least, hardly ever, and then there seemed amply sufficient evidence that she never thought. Her husband appeared fond of her, perhaps for the very reason that she did not talk, certainly a very rare and remarkable trait in woman.

If any fair reader does me the honor to peruse these pages, I fancy I can behold her pouting her lips here, as she says or thinks, "Amongst these oddities, was there no nice, agreeable, beautiful, accomplished young lady, whom the author can describe seriously?" Yes, there was one—but not here, O Lucy! not yet will I write of thee. My pen must be freed from satire first. Let me usher in those sweetly painful memories by a preparatory episode. Let me sweeten my imagination; let me freshen memory, by a breath of the pure, country air, amid the Kaatskills.

CHAPTER XVII.

HESTER.

THE KAATSKILLS—VISIT THE FIRST—SUN-RISE.

"Sweet Highland girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower."

WORDSWORTH.

THE sun was rising over as fair a landscape as any in Italy or Greece—a valley in the Kaatskills. To the right and left rose the mountains, covered with gigantic pines, whose summits were tipped by the golden splendour of the first rays of the luminary. The mists were soaring up till they mingled with the clouds. Down the midst of the valley came a stream, sometimes hurrying over pebbles, sometimes stealing gently on, sometimes leaping over

precipices or dams, made by fallen timber, till it was lost in the quiet waters of the grand and placid lake, whose white, sandy shores were agreeably diversified by bold promontories, curving bays, and granite cliffs, whose scanty covering of soil was amply sufficient to afford nourishment to the beech, the maple, and the birch.

I viewed the scene with the critical perceptions of an artist, and could not help wishing, as I took my way down the mountain side, that my friend Ainslie, a painter, rising into eminence, were here, to transfer it to canvas. There was a log-canoe lying half out of the water. Come, I thought, this kind of craft cannot be more difficult to manage than an out-rigger, and in the whim of the moment, I resolved to give it a trial. The effort to launch it required considerable exertion of strength, and as it obeyed the impulse of a vigorous shove, I found it necessary to tumble into it with more speed than grace, lest it should go adrift without me.

For some minutes I sat quite still in the bottom of the canoe, till the oscillating movement had subsided. Then I rose cautiously in a kneeling posture, and began to navigate my b ark with a paddle which had been left in it. At length I ventured to stand up, though with considerable fear and trembling. I felt rather proud of my achievement, though it certainly did occur to me that it was as well there were none of my fashionable acquaintance from 'The Hotel,' to witness my stooping and ungainly attitude.

From the agreeable delusion that I was quite unobserved, I was quickly awakened by an explosion of laughter from the shore, which caused me to give a sudden start, and narrowly miss losing my balance, and upsetting the canoe, to the bottom of which I dropped ignominiously.

"Beg your pardon, Mister, for laughing," said a female voice, in a provincial accent; and then followed a louder peal, which woke all the echoes in the neighbourhood, and was

faintly repeated from the opposite side of the lake.

"Come," I thought, with a feeling of some relief, "it is only one of the natives after all."

The cacchinator, I could discern at a glance, as she stepped from the "cover," of some rocks (to make use of a phrase of Cooper), was a pretty, buxom, country girl, with a broad-brimmed straw hat on her head, and a milk-pail on her arm.

"Beg pardon, Mister, for my ill-manners for laughing, but you did look so skeared when the canoe was tottlish. No offence, I hope."

"Certainly not, no offence," I replied, as I paddled the canoe to the shore, laughing myself, which seemed to set her mind at ease. "Your laughter is a fair requital of my taking your canoe, without the ceremony of asking, though, I assure you I had no intention of running away with it."

"Do tell," she exclaimed, apparently very much tickled at the idea of making off with a

clumsy wooden canoe. "I guess you're quite welcome to the use of the canoe, only I reckon I can put you across the lake considerable quicker than you could yourself."

The handsome, intelligent countenance of the girl began to interest me, so I replied :

"I reckon you can, and since you are so obliging as to offer it, I shall be most happy to take you at your word."

My rustic beauty said no more, but stepped on board, and having deposited her milk-pail (about two thirds full) in the canoe, and cautioned me to sit as quiet as a mouse, she began to ply her paddle at a rate which sent us flying through the water, yet without the slightest vibratory motion, although she disdained to sit down.

As I sat with my back to the bow, I had a good opportunity of observing her, and a very pleasing study she made; as she bent her body with such a natural grace at every stroke of the paddle, her eyes, black as sloe-berries, sparkling, and the rich color deepening in her

sun-burnt cheek, with the exercise which would have exhausted a drawing-room belle in five minutes ; her plain cotton print dress, showing the symmetry of her figure, confined by no whalebone ligatures, while she talked fluently, in spite of her exertions. By a very natural association of ideas, Gray's beautiful lines occurred to me—

“Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

Involuntarily I pursued the train of thought. All this beauty, all this grace (for beautiful and graceful she is, as the forest trees and the wild flowers are more beautiful than the trimmed branches and hot-house plants), to be hidden in a country village. What a different career might be hers if she were educated ! How soon might she soften the uncouthness of her provincial accent ; how soon would the mental qualities, now slumbering and latent, be strengthened and brightened by the intercourse of civilization.

"Should you like to travel," I asked her suddenly, "or live in a large, gay city, like New York?"

"Well, I guess not," she answered without hesitation. "Zach's ben to York, and he didn't like it. Says it's awfull lonesome to walk the streets all day and not meet a face he knowed; and the stun' side-walks made his feet ache horrid. Reckon I'd rather stay where I was reared. Guess I'd never see a place to like as well as the village."

Her speech served completely to dispel my foolish castle-building, and to recall me to the region of fact and common sense. "The village" was to Hester Harding (for she had told me her name), *the world*, and knowing no other life, and being content with her lot, she was doubtless happier than many a *lady*. I thought it lucky for her that she had no more romance or curiosity in her disposition; and yet such is the contradictory nature of our sentiments, that I could not help a slight feel-

ing of disappointment at her want of enthusiasm.

"I suppose you have a good many artists here now, taking advantage of the fine weather."

"Well, there is considerable. There's one ben living in our cottage for a month, 'cause the Hotel was too full and too noisy. He's drawed out the minister and Dr. Morris both ridic'lous like, to be sure, and Zach wants me to be took" (here she blushed a little), "but mother's agin it. Mother says its contrary to the commandments to make a likeness of anything on the earth. I somehow think mother's wrong, or the minister wouldn't have had his took."

Here the canoe touched the shore. I helped her to pull it up on the beach, for which she thanked me, and was preparing to bid me "good bye," when I stopped her. "Stay a moment, Hester: one question before you go. May I know who Zach. is?"

She blushed crimson, and answered quickly and with petulance—

“I reckon, stranger, that’s none of your business.”

Here she stopped abruptly, looked down and along the shore, and then continued, as if desirous of changing the conversation—
“There’s the painter-man.” I looked in the direction in which she pointed, and saw at some distance on the shore an artist too much absorbed in sketching to notice us.

“Nay, Hester,” I said, “do not let us quarrel. I had no wish to offend you by prying into your secrets. I thought as we had conversed in such a friendly manner, you would have no objection to answer my question. Will you accept this for your trouble in ferrying me over. Perhaps it will go some way towards paying for the picture Zach. wants.”

The gesture with which the country maiden put back the money I offered her would have been proud, had it not been softened by the

manifest desire to recall the offence which she thought her previous words had given, as she replied, "I thank you kindly, Mister, but I can't take your money, for I havn't done nothing to arn it. But I do believe you meant no offence, and I'm sorry I spoke so sharp, and—" Here she hesitated a little. "And to show I ain't cross, I *will* answer your question. The whole village knows it, so why should I be ashamed to tell it. Zach and I are keepin' company, and we are to be married in harvest. Good bye, Mister."

She turned away, lifted her milk pail, and had got some distance before I could overtake her.

"God bless you, Hester, and may you and Zach be happy. I leave the Kaatskills to-morrow, but you must let me come and see you if ever I return. Oblige me by accepting some little token from me as a friend." With some difficulty I got her to accept a gold dollar—a coin which she had never seen before, and which evidently hit her fancy, and then I

stood watching her receding form till it disappeared among the trees.



“What, *Ainslie!*” I exclaimed, as I approached near enough to recognize the artist pointed out to me by Hester. He was too much absorbed to notice my exclamation, so I crept up and looked over his shoulder. He was making an elaborate study in oil of the beautiful scene. In the foreground he had sketched a girl paddling a canoe, which I perceived at once to be a representation of Hester Harding. This, coupled with the fact that he was staying at her mother’s cottage, caused an uncomfortable suspicion to arise in my mind, for Ainslie was young, handsome, and a great favorite with the ladies. I determined if possible to discover if there was any ground for my mistrust.

Ainslie at length looked up from his work, and was very glad to see me. He shook my

hand warmly as he listened to my congratulations on his admirable picture.

"That will gain you credit at the Exhibition," I said. "You are making such an elaborate study that you might exhibit the original sketch."

"Yes," replied Ainslie, pleased with my praise, which he thought was sincere, "I've hit on the true method at last. No more composition in the studio for me, but close rendering of Nature, as I see her face to face."

"You are sure to succeed this way," I continued, "provided you don't take the meanest aspects of Nature, or to speak more correctly, the results of Nature deformed by artificial life, as some of the pre-Raphaelites seem to pride themselves on doing. But where did you get this girl and canoe in the foreground? Is this a piece of imagination?"

"Not a bit of it, but a deuced pretty country girl, who crosses the lake every morning to milk her cows—"

"And at whose mother's cottage Mr. Ainslie is staying," I rejoined, in a careless tone, but watching my companion closely.

"Yes," he replied, very unconcernedly, "the hotel was too full and too noisy for me. I wanted a nice, cosy room in a cottage, and I have suited myself capitally. But how do you come to be so well informed?"

"Hester Harding," I replied, "has just put me over in her canoe. She is a pretty girl, is she not? Tell me something about her. I take quite an interest in her."

"Indeed!" replied Ainslie; "well, there's no accounting for tastes. But really I am too much occupied with my canvas and brushes to study the character of every country girl. Why did you ask me if I had imagined the figure, if you know the original?"

"Ainslie," I replied, "I am a bad hand at dissembling. Excuse me, if I take the privilege of some congeniality of pursuits, to speak with a frankness which the brief term of our acquaintance would hardly warrant. I know

your reputation as a man of gallantry. Tell me the truth. Have you not some underhand design in living at this cottage? God forgive you if you are conspiring against the innocence of this poor girl. Are there not plenty of flirts and coquettes in New York to afford you ample employment, without destroying the happiness of a village maiden."

Ainslie regarded me with every symptom of honest indignation. He seemed at first inclined to quarrel with me, but gradually the sense of the ludicrous seemed to overcome his irascible feelings, and he fairly burst into a fit of laughter.

"Upon my word, Rollingstone," he said, "you are going it. Have you any more thunder-bolts to launch at my devoted head? O cloud-compelling Jupiter! Are you a saint, yourself—you incarnation of Don Juan, that you presume to lecture me in this outrageous manner! Not only are your remarks perfectly uncalled for, but they are unjust—most excruciatingly unjust."

Here he imitated Burton, that admirable comedian, in his celebrated character of "Paul Pry," so well, that I found it difficult to refrain from laughter.

"Because thou art virtuous, shall there be no more cakes and ale? Are you going to turn knight-errant and redresser of wrongs that have no existence save in your own imagination, or are you getting up the steam, the eloquent denunciation dodge, preparatory to entering the church?"

"Are you hoaxing me? No. I really believe you are serious. Can't you give us a little more of it? Pray, do. Well, you pay me a *high compliment*, certainly, in imagining I could waste my valuable time in making a conquest of a country damsel, who can barely read and write. A woman to be worth winning, at least in my opinion, must have some ideas, some education, some of that delicacy, which only people of a certain rank and breeding possess. This Hester Harding, who talks through her nose, and hasn't an idea beyond

churning butter and making cheese, who has no conception even of the beauty and grandeur of the scenes among which she passes her life—why, my dear fellow, she could not understand me if I spoke to her about love. I should weary of the pursuit long before I made any impression on her heavy nature. These sort of girls have no souls you see. They are capable of a sort of instinctive animal-attachment to a male being in their own degree, who *courts* them after the fashion they understand, that is, pulls and hauls them about. If you give me two women to make a conquest of—the one ignorant—the other refined and intelligent, I would rather undertake the latter.”

“That is a very immoral sentiment, Ainslie.”

“Oh, hang your morality. I am only putting a case for the sake of argument. Now this Hetty Harding has a certain quantity of good looks, I admit. But you miss that in-

ward loveliness of the mind which only education and refinement can bestow. She once asked me what I expected to get for this picture at New York—'*York*,' as she calls it, and when I told her '*a dollar*,' she thought I was joking."

"And so you *were* joking, Ainslie. You know you will get at least 250 dollars for that picture."

"Yes, but you misunderstand. She thought a dollar *too much*. She couldn't understand how a little canvas and coloured paints could fetch such a price, and so she cried, '*Do tell*,' and 'you don't say!' The idea of my being interested in a girl who says, '*Do tell*,' and 'you don't say.'"

"My dear Ainslie," I replied, "accept my ample apologies. Forgive my suspicions. I have wronged you. But admitting that you do not turn aside from your glorious ambition, to play with this girl's affections, do remember that you are young and good looking, and

that perhaps she never was in her life before in the society of a gentleman. Suppose she should fall in love with you."

"Ditto, ditto," said Ainslie, bowing with mock gravity; "upon my word, Rollingstone, you are vastly amusing. Does not everything you have just said apply to you equally with myself?—nay in a much greater degree to you, for besides that I am vastly your inferior in all these personal accomplishments, and am not to be named in the same breath with you as a lady-killer; have you not a great deal more leisure time on your hands than I have. Love-making with *me* is only a recreation in the intervals of work; but with *you* it is the business of life, and yet you have the audacity to preach to me. Upon my word I believe you are in love with the girl yourself, and have begun this attack on me to get me out of the way."

"Well, but remember I am not quartered in the cottage," said I, laughing in spite of myself at Ainslie's so ingeniously turning the

tables upon me, and not without some compunction of conscience.

Ainslie laughed scornfully as he replied—

“ Either you are playing a very deep game, Rollingstone, or you have not the knowledge of human nature for which I gave you credit. Is it possible you have conversed with this Dulcinea, and not discovered that she has no sympathies with anything beyond the dull routine of her own existence. Nature meant her for milking cows, churning butter, and darning hose for some respectable clod-hopper. By the way, now I think of it, you may set your mind quite at rest. She has a lover already. A bumpkin with hair like thatch, a face like a full moon, and a fist like a shoulder of mutton. Trust me, I have no desire to rival this Orson.”

After some further bantering on Ainslie's part, it ended in my firm conviction that I had done him an injustice, and that there was no ground for my suspicions.

CHAPTER XVIII.

UNDINE.

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm will soothe her melancholy?
What art will wash her guilt away?

GOLDSMITH.

Two years had passed away since my visit to the Kaatskills. I had been hunting the moose in Canada during the winter, on snow shoes, following the buffaloes on the western prairies, and attacking the grisly bear in the rocky mountains. I now returned to New York with that satisfaction with which, after a long sojourn in the wilderness, we revisit the haunts of civilization. I found Ainslie had

grown famous during the interval. My curiosity was greatly excited to see three pictures, of which the journals had spoken with the highest praise.

It was singular too that they were historical, a branch of the art in which Ainslie had hitherto exhibited nothing whatever, and the subjects showed the ambitious aspirations of the artist. They were "The Annunciation," "The Death of Arria," "Judith with the head of Holofernes." I lost no time in going to the exhibition of the National Academy, and I found the reality surpass my expectations. Ainslie seemed to have caught some new and incomprehensible inspiration, to be able to produce these works at such an early age; to succeed in a branch of art, which had hitherto been with him subservient to landscape painting.

As I stood before these magnificent pictures, I felt that I beheld the evidences of true genius, and I anticipated a bright future for the young artist. The cold conventional cant

of criticism was silent, and faults of execution were passed over in the grateful emotions called up by the bold and successful treatment of subjects so sublime.

There you beheld Judith, the woman who endangered if she did not sacrifice, her honor for her country. No relenting, no pity there, for the struggle of the dying Holofernes.

There you beheld the noble Arria, last of the Roman matrons, drawing the steel from her bosom, and casting on her husband such a look of tenderness—the look which “conquers agony,” and expresses so plainly her immortal words.

“*It is not painful, Pætus.*”

But the painter’s *chef-d’œuvre* was “The Annunciation.” There you beheld the Jewish maiden kneeling, not as she has been so often represented by Italian painters, a blonde in an affected attitude, but a veritable, dark-haired, dark-eyed daughter of Israel, sinking down in sublime beatitude before the heavenly visitant. The artist had triumphed in the ex-

pression of mingled awe and joy at the tidings that she was the chosen of her race, the "blessed among women," in whom the fulfilment of the prophecy of the Messiah is to be accomplished. Gazing on the picture, you forgot paint, canvas, and artist's skill; you thought of a living woman, till you almost expected to hear issuing from the parted lips the glorious song of thanksgiving recorded by Luke.

"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

I was roused from my reverie by a conversation carried on by two people among the crowd of spectators.

"Who did you say the model was?"

"A beautiful woman who accompanied him from Italy."

"I thought Ainslie never was in Italy."

"Well, I don't know, that's the report. It's quite an Italian face, and one can easily see all the pictures are painted from the same model."

And the speakers passed out of hearing.

I had perceived at once that all the pictures had been painted from the same model, and also that it could not be one of the professional models, all of whom I knew by sight; and now the impression began to grow upon me that the features were not altogether strange. Was it only a mere chance resemblance, or where had I actually seen the woman who had formed the original of these pictures.

Ainslie, I found, lived in apartments attached to his studio. That evening we were sitting together amongst pictures, busts, sketches, and all the paraphernalia of art. We had just begun to settle into something like conversation after the first rapid and disjointed congratulations, questions, &c., which signalize the meeting of friends after a long absence.

"Ainslie," I said, "you need have no misgivings now for the future, you are already famous; but do tell me where you have

picked up this wonderful model, who seems to have breathed such inspiration into you?"

While I was speaking, a tall, graceful, elegantly dressed young female, whom I recognized at a glance as the model of the picture, entered quickly and threw her arms round Ainslie's neck before she perceived my presence. She blushed, cast her eyes down, and left the room hastily on seeing me. Ainslie called after her.

"Only an old friend, *Carissima*, to whom I will introduce you when tea is ready."

So she is an Italian after all, thought I.

"Don't you know her?" said Ainslie with some embarrassment, after a pause, as if waiting for me to question him.

"No," said I, "how should I know her, I have never seen her before? I see she is very fond of you, and that she is the model from which you have painted those three fine pictures. Is she an Italian?"

"An Italian!" repeated Ainslie, "I have

never been in Italy. Rollingstone, have you quite forgotten our meeting in the Kaatskills two years ago."

"What!" I exclaimed, starting to my feet as a blinding flash of memory poured over my mind, "you don't mean to tell me that that sweet, pretty, innocent, country girl, Hester Harding, is your—" I could not go on.

"Rollingstone, before you blame me hear all," cried Ainslie.

The substance of Ainslie's explanation, which would occupy many pages if given in detail, was briefly this. My remarks, though made with the best intentions, had unfortunately helped to cause the very evil they were designed to prevent. Ainslie assured me, and I fully believed him, that at the time the conversation already recorded, occurred, he had never bestowed a serious thought on Hetty. That unlucky dialogue had excited his curiosity, and first led him to associate her with the idea of love. He had grown better acquainted with her, and found underneath her apparent

insensibility a latent intelligence, a depth of feeling, and especially an interest in his art, which pleased him in proportion, as it was totally unexpected. The intimacy grew and strengthened. He had a sore struggle between duty and passion, but the latter gained the day, and it ended in the poor girl forsaking home, mother, suitor, and sacrificing everything to live in guilt with the man she loved.

I stifled, as well as I could, my emotions of indignation and pity, at the sad relation. I refrained from all reproaches to Ainslie, as I saw that his conscience was touched, and I hoped that it was not too late to remedy the evil. I returned home deeply affected, as I looked upon myself, as in some degree, the innocent cause of the catastrophe. I will not detail the first private interview I had with Hester, in some respects so much improved, in others, so far deteriorated, from the village maiden of two years ago. I devoted some time to studying her character, and when I found I was not mistaken; that though she

had erred, she had repented, that she loved Ainslie with her whole heart and soul, with a depth and fervour of which I, in my utter ignorance of her nature, had fancied her incapable; I took the opportunity of a private interview with my friend, to ask him what he proposed doing about Hester.

He endeavoured to parry the question, and change the conversation, but I pressed him closely, though as delicately as possible.

He said he did not know—time would show, &c., &c.

“She is very fond of you, Ainslie?”

“I know that,”

“And she has really made wonderful progress in self-education.”

“Yes.”

He admitted that he had been quite wrong in his estimate of her, at the Kaatskills.

“Ainslie,” I said solemnly, “*Do you intend to marry Hester Harding?*”

He stared at me as if I had said something insulting.

“*Marry her!* marry a poor girl—make a

mésalliance now, with such bright prospects opening before me—when I may make my fortune, and look for wealth, family, beauty, everything in a wife!”

I felt my temper rising, but for Hester's sake, I resolved to keep cool.

“Ainslie,” I replied, “I say nothing about gratitude, nothing about justice. The girl has abandoned her home, her mother, the man who loved, and would have married her; she has forfeited honor, prospects, everything for you. She has done a great deal more than this. *She has made you famous!* You painted no such pictures before you knew her. Do you owe this woman nothing?”

His cheek flushed and paled alternately, but he remained silent.

I went on. “Suppose you satisfied the claims of justice, gratitude, duty; suppose, besides, it was to your own interest to marry Hester.”

“How my own interest? What do you mean?”

“You are an artist,” I replied, “It is es-

sential to success in your profession, that you should live with a woman, who has a congenial mind. This woman has already laid you under a heavier debt of gratitude than any other woman in the world, except *your mother*. Her love has inspired you. You have transformed her from a chrysalis into a butterfly. You have made of the simple country girl, whom we thought so insensible, an earnest, loving, passionate woman. You have read Undine; you know what I mean. You have given this woman a soul. You have touched her with Promethean fire, and quickened into life, the strength, devotion, poetry, and beauty which existed latent in this woman, about whom we were both so mistaken. Already her conversation shews the sense of *a hundred young ladies*! I have noted her carefully. She comprehends you even before you speak. You talk of family, wealth, and beauty in a wife. Family and wealth you might find incumbrances instead of help to you, as an artist. Beauty,

Hester has in abundance. Her heart you already possess. If you marry her, Ainslie, you will be strong, you will be great, you will be successful, you will be *happy*!"

"Impossible," replied Ainslie, "I am all-but engaged to Miss Vandeleur?"

"Miss Vandeleur, to my certain knowledge, has been engaged three times, at least, already. She is a fine lady, who, if she should ever go to England, would associate with none except titled people. A nice wife she will make for a rising artist! She will drag you back instead of helping you forward. She will be jealous of your devotion to art. You will find no inspiration in her love. You have succeeded in gaining a jewel, a female heart, a woman who has given the greatest proof in her power, that she loves you—beware how you cast your treasure away."

"What," replied Ainslie, "would you have me marry a woman who has lived with me as my mistress?"

"*Shame on you!*" I cried, losing all my self-

restraint at this last proof of heartlessness.

"Do you reproach this woman with the sacrifice she has made for you. Does not the sin lie infinitely more at your door than at hers?"

"But she has never asked me to marry her, and—and—she is very happy,—very contented as she is."

"Ainslie," I said, "Hester Harding never *will* ask you to marry her. Her love and her pride are too strong to supplicate as a favour, what you ought to accord as a right. And do you really mean that you think her happy and contented. Oh, if you really think so, learn to know her better; learn to see in this, but a new proof of her magnanimity and love, the depth of her disinterested love to you, which bids her stifle, with a *noble deceit*,* of which only *women* are capable, all signs of grief and sorrow, in *your presence*, because she knows that such signs would be a tacit reproach to you. Do you know what she does

* See the fine term "*splendide mendax*" of Horace. Book III., Ode II.

in solitude? Does she never think of her simple innocent life, by the beautiful mountain-lake, of her cottage home, her village friends, her mother, her rustic suitor, to whom she was attached before she knew you. Oh! Ainslie, if you don't know all this, believe me when I say I have spoken with her, and *I know* how often her smiles hide an aching heart."

"Say no more at present. I can't bear it. Give me time to reflect. I have thought of this. I wish to do right, and your words have cut me to the heart."

I left Ainslie full of hope, that he would yet repair Hester's great wrong.

CHAPTER XIX.

* THE IDEAL.

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
And fevers into false creation.

BYRON.

AINSLIE and I were one day walking down Broadway, when we observed in the window of a picture dealer, a painting which exerted over both of us an invincible attraction. It was the head of a man, apparently between fifty and sixty, with strongly marked and very peculiar features. But it was not the look of intellectual power exhibited by the lineaments,

*The remarkable instance of monomania which forms the subject of this chapter, is freely adapted from a romance of Balzac, which has never, (so far as the author is aware) been rendered into English.

nor the artistic skill shewn in the execution ; it was the eye which formed the principal feature of fascination. It was not their color, which was a greenish grey, nor the fact that they looked at the spectator and seemed to follow him about—but that they displayed unmistakeably that wild staring expression which always accompanies aberration of mind.

In reply to our inquiries, the picture dealer informed us that it was the portrait of an artist painted by himself. We experienced eager curiosity to become acquainted with the singular being who could thus publish to the world his own mental infirmity. For the picture furnished incontestible evidence on two points ; it was the work of a man of genius, and also of genius not always under its possessor's control.

Without entering into the details, it is sufficient to say, that at length, after much delay and difficulty, we succeeded, owing to that freemasonry subsisting between those who

love and practice the same beautiful art, in becoming acquainted with Warner, the artist. This had happened previously to my leaving New York, and since my return I had frequently met Warner in company with Ainslie, at his usual haunt, an old-fashioned coffee house in the lower part of the city.

Warner always commanded a ready sale for his pictures when he could be persuaded to finish one. At length we discovered the real secret of his apparent idleness ; he had been working for ten years on a single picture, representing his ideal of female beauty, which was to bear away the palm from the Venus of Titian, to be in painting what the Venus de Medicis is in sculpture. After we had once got the secret from him, he used to rave about this picture as though it had been a real woman, whom he loved. Our curiosity to see this great work was devouring, but he steadily refused us admission to his studio, and even lost his temper when the subject was proposed.

One day that we met at the usual rendezvous, he seemed unaccountably depressed.

"What is the matter?" enquired Ainslie, "is your oil bad; won't your brushes work well?"

"Oh," cried Warner, in accents of despair, "I fancied for an instant that my task was achieved, but I am mistaken in several details. I shall not be contented till I have cleared up my doubts. I must go to Europe. Perhaps in Greece or Turkey I may find a woman beautiful enough to compare my picture with. Yet," he added, with a sigh of contentment, "perhaps I have arrived at nature herself. Sometimes I tremble lest my breathing should awake this woman, and she should leave me."

"Suppose" said Ainslie, speaking with a quivering lip and sparkling eye, "suppose I could save you the expense and fatigues of such a journey."

"How?" said Warner, looking at him, astonished.

"Listen," replied Ainslie. We are brother artists, and you are an old man, else I would not make this proposition. I have a mistress, a woman who loves me, from whom I have painted those pictures which you have seen. You may judge then whether she is beautiful or not. Well, you shall see her; she shall serve as your model, to enable you to judge whether your picture is perfect or not; but only on one condition, that you let us see your picture."

"What!" exclaimed Warner, starting from one of his long reveries, in which he remained immoveable as if in a trance, "show my creation, my wife; tear the veil under which I have chastely concealed my honor—it would be a vile prostitution. For ten years I have lived with this woman. She is mine, mine alone; she loves me. Have I not seen her smile on me at every fresh touch of the brush which made her more beautiful? She has a soul I tell you; I have given her a soul; she would blush if other eyes than mine beheld

her. Exhibit her! What husband, what lover so vile as to conduct his wife to shame? When you paint a picture for the public you do not put your soul into your work; you sell colored dolls only. My picture is not a picture; it is a sentiment, a passion. Born in my studio, it must remain there, virgin; it cannot appear undraped. Do we possess the Fornarina of Raphael, the Angelica of Ariosto, the Beatrice of Dante? No, we see their forms alone. Well, the work which I keep under lock and key is an exception in our art; it is not a canvas, it is a woman—a woman with whom I laugh, weep, talk, think. Do you ask me to discard the happiness of ten years as I would throw off a cloak? Would you have me in an instant cease to be a father, a lover, a creator, a God? This woman is not a creature, but a creation. Ah! I am still more of a lover than an artist. Yes, I shall have the courage to burn my beautiful *Lais* at my last hour. But to oblige her to support the gaze of a man—a young man—an artist?

no, no. Would you have me submit my idol to cold scrutiny and stupid criticism? Oh! love is a mystery; it has no life but in the depth of the heart, and all is lost when a man says, even to his friend,—Behold the woman I love.”

I whispered into the ear of Ainslie, “you cannot persist in your intention after what you have heard.”

He replied through his clenched teeth, and in a voice which shewed his unflinching determination, “Yes, I am determined to see his picture.” Then turning to Warner, he said—

“But is it not woman for woman, if I let you see my mistress?”

“What mistress?” replied Warner, “*she* will betray you some day or other; *mine* will be always faithful.”

“Very well,” returned Ainslie, in an angry tone, “Go to Europe, go to Greece or Turkey. Only before you find even in Asia a woman as beautiful, as perfect as the one of whom I

“speak, you will perhaps die and leave unfinished your great work.”

“Oh! it is finished,” cried Warner. “You would imagine you saw a woman lying on a couch of velvet beneath a curtain. Near her a golden tripod exhales perfumes. You will be tempted to touch, to seize the tassel of the cord which retains the curtain. You will fancy that you behold the bosom of the beautiful *Lais* rise and fall with each respiration. Still I would be quite satisfied—”

He knitted his brows, and paused a long time in one of his customary reveries. Suddenly he broke silence, and said, as if the words cost him a terrible effort :

“Bring your model—if she be as beautiful as you say—I consent—you shall see my *Lais*.”

* * * * *

“Hester never will consent to what you are going to propose to her,” was all I said to Ainslie, when we had quitted Warner.

"She will do whatever I ask her to do," said Ainslie, with marked emphasis.

I said no more.

* * * * *

Three days afterwards we stood together at the door of Warner's studio.

"Enter, enter," said Warner, who appeared radiant with happiness. "My picture is perfect. I can show it with pride. Never will painter, pencils, colours, canvas, and light create a rival to the beautiful *Lais*."

A prey to the most lively curiosity, Ainslie and I entered a vast studio, dusty, and in disorder, with numerous pictures attached to the walls. A simultaneous ejaculation of delight burst from my companion and myself as we both stopped before a picture representing a woman, life-size, and half draped.

"Pshaw, don't mind that," said Warner. "That's merely a canvas, on which I dashed off a study for a pose; it is worth nothing. These are my errors," he continued, pointing

to ravishing sketches and finished pictures round the walls.

Stupified with this disdain for such masterpieces, we both diligently sought in every direction for the announced picture, but in vain.

“ Well, there it is !” cried Warner, standing before us, his hair dishevelled, his face inflamed, his wild eyes gleaming with preternatural exultation, and panting like a lover intoxicated with passion. “ Aha !” he continued, “ you did not expect such perfection. You are before a woman where you were looking for a work of art. The back-ground is so natural, the aerial perspective so real, that you cannot distinguish it from the atmosphere which surrounds you. Where is art ? Lost, imperceptible ! Behold the very figure of a young woman. Have I not seized the color, and the exact line, which appears to bound the body. Observe the same phenomena presented to us by objects which are in the air, like fishes in the water. Note how the

outline detaches itself from the back-ground. Does it not seem as if you could pass your hand over this back? For seven years have I studied the effects of light impinging upon objects. See this hair, these tresses—are they not inundated with light? Oh! she breathes, I think! This bosom—look! Oh! who would not kneel before such beauty? The flesh palpitates! Wait—she is going to rise!”

“Do you see anything,” said Ainslie to me.

“Nothing,” I replied. “Do you?”

“Nothing whatever!”

While Warner was indulging in his ecstasy we both simultaneously began to examine whether the light falling directly on the canvas, he had indicated, might not neutralize all its effects. We looked at the picture from the right, from the left, in front; stooping down, and standing up, by turns.

“Yes, yes, it is a canvas,” cried Warner, misunderstanding the object of this scrutiny.

"See, here is the stretcher, the easel, and here are my colors, my brushes."

And seizing a brush, he held it out with the utmost simplicity.

"The old humbug is quizzing us," whispered Ainslie, walking backwards from the pretended picture. "I see nothing but a confused mass of colors, bounded by a multitude of ridiculous lines, forming a wall of paint."

"We are mistaken," I cried; "look here."

In one corner of the canvas we discovered the end of a naked foot, peeping out from the chaos of colors, tints, and indefinite shadows, which composed a sort of shapeless mist—but a delicious, exquisite, living foot! We remained petrified with wonder and admiration before this fragment, which had escaped from an incredibly slow and progressive destruction. This foot appeared there like the torso of some Venus of Parian marble, surviving among the rubbish of a city consumed by fire.

"There is a woman underneath," I said,

pointing out to Ainslie the different layers of color, with which the old painter had successively covered every part of the figure, while wishing to perfect it. We turned together towards Warner, as we began to have a vague understanding of the illusion in which he lived.

“He is in earnest,” said Ainslie.

“Yes, my friend,” replied the old man, recalled to himself, “one must be in earnest, one must have faith in his art, and live a long time with his work to produce a creation like this. Some of those shadows have cost me immense labor. Look there, in yonder cheek just under the eye, there is a delicate penumbra, which, if you observe it in nature, would seem almost impossible to represent. Well, do you believe it has cost me labour inconceivable to reproduce it. But regard my work attentively, and you will better understand what I was saying to you, relative to modelling and outline. Observe the light on this bosom, and see how, by a succession of touch-

ing and scumbling, or bold impasto, I have succeeded in catching the effect of light itself, and combining it with the shining whiteness of bright tints; and how, by a contrary process, by effacing the prominence and the grain of the impasto, I have managed, by caressing the outline lost in demi-tint, to banish even the idea of drawing and artificial means, and to give the rotundity of nature. Come nearer and you will judge better of the effect—it disappears at a distance. Stay—now it is very distinct,” and with the end of his brush he indicated an impasto of luminous color.

Ainslie touched the old man on the shoulder, as he said with a side glance at me: “Do you know that we see in you a very great painter?”

“A greater poet than painter,” I replied aside.

“After all, how much happiness is in these few square yards of canvas?” said Ainslie.

Warner paid no attention to us. He was smiling on his imaginary mistress.

"But sooner or later he will discover there is nothing on his canvas?" said Ainslie aloud.

"Nothing upon my canvas!" cried Warner, looking alternately at us and his pretended picture.

"What have you done?" I exclaimed to my companion.

Warner grasped Ainslie by the arm, as he cried: "You see nothing. Slave, idiot, rascal, fool—why have you come here then? And you," he cried, turning suddenly to me. "Are you also mocking me? Answer me. Have I spoiled my picture?"

I hesitated, unwilling to speak, but the anxiety displayed in the pale features of the old man was so cruel, that I pointed to the canvas and said, "Look!" Warner gazed on his picture for a moment and staggered.

"Nothing! nothing! and after having labored ten years!"

He sat down and wept. "I am then an

imbecile, a madman. I have neither talent nor genius. I have produced nothing!"

He gazed at his picture through his tears. Suddenly he arose proudly, and casting a furious glance at us, he cried :

"By heaven! you are both jealous, and wish to make me think my work spoiled in order to rob me of it. But I see her," he cried. "She is marvellously beautiful!"

And he covered his Lais with a green baize curtain, with the serious tranquillity of a jeweller, who locks his drawers in presence of adroit thieves. Then casting on us a sullen look of contempt and suspicion, he conducted us in silence to the door of his studio, and dismissed us on the threshold, with these words :

"Adieu, my little friends!"

I subsequently learnt that Warner had committed suicide, having previously burned all his pictures and painting materials.

CHAPTER XX.

THE KAATSKILLS—VISIT THE SECOND—SUNSET.

"The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To bring repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom is *to die!*"

GOLDSMITH.

THREE years have elapsed since my first visit to the Kaatskills, and once more I am looking down on the well-remembered scene where I first beheld Hester Harding. This time, however, it is evening. I felt that tinge of melancholy which the dying day is so apt to produce in our reflective moods. Is the idea altogether fanciful, that nature exerts some mysterious sympathetic influence, (it may be

in some minute degree over all her creatures) but especially over that wonderful animal, who is alone able to find abstract pleasure in contemplating her changes—Man? Why is my soul buoyant and joyous at sun-rise, subdued, almost melancholy, at sun-set? I sat long after the orb, which is the source of light, life, and happiness to the world, had disappeared below the horizon, watching the flaky clouds change from gold to crimson, from crimson to purple, from purple to dusky blue, as twilight stole over the scene.

My thoughts by a very natural association of ideas reverted to Hester Harding. My intimacy with Ainslie had cooled of late, owing to his impatience of my advice; but I hoped that no news was good news, as no tidings whatever of her fate had reached me. At this moment the plaintive air of one of the negro melodies arose from the valley, heard distinctly in the silence of evening. I started, for there was something familiar to me in the sounds of the voice, although there was an

inexpressibly mournful monotony in the way in which these words were sung.

"All the world seems sad and dreary,
 Every where I roam,
 Oh, darkies! how my heart grows weary,
 Far from the old folks at home."

The singer was a female, who was sitting on a rock near the edge of the lake. At some little distance a man in a rustic garb was watching her attentively. A terrible misgiving flashed across my mind. In the impulse of the moment I rushed forward exclaiming: "Hester!" She turned her head mechanically, and then went on singing in the same low tones as before.

"All the world seems sad and dreary."

The man approached me. I divined at once that he was her old lover, Zacchary Burt. But oh, my God! could that slovenly dressed woman, crouching on the rock, with dishevelled hair, and eyes from which the light of reason had fled, rocking her body to and

fro, and singing songs which had no meaning for her, be the bright, laughing, happy, comely girl of three years ago, the tidy, comely Hester Harding. I covered my face with my hands and wept.



For some time after the cessation of my intimacy with Ainslie, all had gone smoothly. Hester, if not happy, had appeared contented. She believed that she possessed her lover's heart, and as she was not selfish, that was sufficient. She went on diligently improving herself by all the means at her disposal, perhaps in the hope that some day Ainslie might make her his wife.

She either would not, or could not, see the symptoms of the usual results which attend these *liaisons*,—that Ainslie was growing tired of her, till one day he touched on the subject of their separation. At first she could not understand him. Why should they separate?

Could she not accompany him to Europe, and continue to be his model, and thus indirectly assist him to paint great pictures. At last, he spoke more plainly. He told her their connexion must come to an end; that he was engaged to be married to another woman; and he offered, as delicately as he could, to give her a handsome dowry to enable her to marry Zacchary Burt, or any other respectable man in her own station.

She had been all gentleness and tears a moment before. At the mention of a rival, she looked like her own portrait in the character of Judith. There was a brief scene of violent reproach. She threatened that if he dared to speak words of love to another woman she would murder both him and her. Ainslie now completely lost his temper. He declared they must part for ever, and offered her a heavy purse of gold. She spurned it under her feet, and rushed from the house.

He repented after she had gone, and made every attempt to find her. Not succeeding,

he consoled himself with the hope that she had returned home, that she would marry Zacchary Burt, and when her feelings had cooled with time, accept the dowry he had offered her, and thus the affair would have a satisfactory termination. But while he pleased himself with these illusions, Hester was still in New York. Though she had broken with her betrayer, she loved him still. And in the middle of the night, a muffled figure often stood looking up at the windows of Ainslie's studio. The thought that he had ceased to love her, however, and her pride would not permit her to make the first advances to reconciliation.

One night a well-dressed female accosted her. Hester, friendless, miserable, and almost in want of necessaries, met her again and again, and something like an acquaintance grew up between them. She told her dangerous companion the outlines of her history. The latter lent her a little money from time to time, which with Hester's earnings from washing and slop-work barely supported

life. To all the insidious temptations of her companion, Hester remained long unconscious; until at length, her eyes opened suddenly to the depravity of the woman, and she shrank from her in horror and dismay. Her pretended friend laughed to scorn her scruples, as she seized her rudely by the arm.

"You are a hypocrite," she said, "you shall repay me what I have lent you before we part, I warrant you."

Hester struggled, and implored the help of a passing stranger. The man, who at first shook off her arm, suddenly bent down, and looked keenly into her face. "Hetty!" Zacch!" were the only words uttered by either for a long time. At length, Zacchary Burt said, slowly :

"Hetty, I have been seeking you in New York for a weary time. Somehow, I wish I had never found you."

Hester understood the signification of his words, and the slight movement of aversion which accompanied them. She clung closer

to him, and her thin wan fingers quivered nervously on his arm, as she almost shrieked :

“Zacch! Zacch! So help me God, I am not what you take me for!”

He looked in her face, and believed her. A tear came into his eye, and he put his arm tenderly about her. The change in his manner was more than her full heart could bear. She murmured almost unintelligibly a few words :

“Bless you, Zacch. Take me home to mother, and I—” *She had fainted on his bosom.*

* * * *

As Hester recovered her mental faculties so did her bodily strength decay. When laid on the bed from which she was never to rise again, she recovered entirely her right mind. At her own express desire I used to come and read the Bible to her. Though I sorrowed in secret, my grief was chastened in presence of

the repentant girl, so resigned, and calmly awaiting her summons to leave this world. That supernatural courage which strengthened the dying girl seemed to be infused into the hearts of those who entered her presence. Her mother alone was unable to restrain her tears.

Hester would say sometimes after I had finished reading words of comfort, "I think I must be forgiven, else I would not feel so happy. But tell mother not to grieve so. I feel it is *that* that's keeping me. Mother is not willing to let me go."

I was astonished to discover in her conversation so much real refinement of mind, such deep appreciation of the beautiful. Had I been utterly mistaken on my first conception of her character, in not perceiving, underneath the husk of her rusticity, the deep mine of keen sensibility and native shrewdness; or did an intelligence, not of this world, a herald of a brighter kingdom spread itself over her last days? Sometimes when she thought

herself alone, she was heard praying God to forgive her betrayer, and turn the heart of her betrothed, who had vowed the bitterest vengeance.

One day, she said to me. "How long would it take *him* to come from York, if a letter were sent now?"

"If he started at once on receiving it, he might be here to-morrow night, or, at any rate on the following morning."

"Pray write then, and tell him to come. I want to see him so much, and make Zacch promise to forgive him, and to hear him call me '*Hetty*' once more. Tell him to come at once, or it will be too late."

She had calculated with strange exactitude the extent of her earthly pilgrimage. She lived till the morrow of the day after that on which the letter was sent. To the very last she evidently expected to see Edgar Ainslie, and it was painfully touching to see her eyes fixed on the door, through which he might be momentarily expected to enter.

A very affecting incident occurred just before she died. For an hour or two, she had been delirious, and when Zacchary Burt entered the room, she mistook him for her long expected lover. Her eyes brightened. She pronounced the name of "Edgar" in the fondest accents of love, and almost her last act was an attempt to place the hand of the supposed Ainslie on a small brooch containing his likeness and a lock of his hair, which she wore on her bosom. No one would have wished to disturb the happy illusion under which she died, though everyone pitied Zacchary, who received this unconscious testimony of her love to his rival. I thought Ainslie had shrunk from a last interview, but in this I did him an injustice.

So died Hester; but this was not all. To borrow the beautiful language of the greatest of modern poets:—

She died, but not alone; she held within,
 A second principle of life, which might
 Have dawned a fair and sinless child of sin;
 But closed its little being without light,

256 THE LAST DAYS OF A BACHELOR.

And went down to the grave unborn, wherein
Blossom and bough lie withered with one blight.
In vain the dews of heaven descend above
The bleeding flower and blasted fruit of love.



A simple country funeral wound along the hilly path which led to the village burial-ground, on the slope of the mountain. No city pomp, none of the conventional mockery of woe, making death hideous; no coal-black steeds with nodding plumes, no hearse, no mutes; but the coffin supported on men's shoulders, the pall strewn with violets and daisies; the old minister walking first, the villagers, men and women, following in pairs.

The good minister's voice faltered as he began the service. He had baptised Hester; she had grown up under his eye. The neighbours clustered round the grave. The women wept. Nothing was now remembered but the trials, the sufferings, the virtues of the dead. Her sin had passed to a higher tribunal.

There was one sturdy young man there who did not weep, yet he occupied the place of chief mourner. He stood at the foot of the grave, partly isolated from the rest. Woe is not to be measured by tears ; a close observer might have perceived by the knitted brow, the stern expression of the features, and the firmly clenched hands, that other emotions than grief stirred the heart within the strong frame of Zacchary Burt. He had been Hester Harding's first love ; they had been betrothed, and shortly to be married ; and now, she lay there, and the ground fell on her coffin lid,—and her seducer, her destroyer, lived, prosperous, respected, and — *happy*? — we shall see.

The service had come to an end ; they were filling in the grave, when a commotion was observed in the little assemblage, which parted hastily and in trepidation, as a man bare-headed, his long hair streaming behind him, his dress disordered, was seen approaching at full speed. He came up breathless and

panting, and flung himself down on the mould by the side of the grave, wringing his hands and exclaiming, "*Too late! too late!*"

Zacchary Burt darted forward and seized Edgar Ainslie by the throat. "Villain! you have murdered her, and you dare to come here, to her very grave; stand up, if you are a man!" and he began stripping off his coat and waistcoat.

Ainslie looked up, and seemed at length to recognize the man he had so greatly wronged. He shrieked out, "You are Zacchary Burt—you loved Hester. Yes, you are right—I have murdered her. It is too late for reparation but not for retribution—not for retribution; no, no," he repeated with a wild laugh. "Here, here!" He pulled forth a pistol, which he thrust into Zacchary's hand—"by *her* grave, by *your* hand; that will be poetical justice. Here, at my heart; take good aim; oh, I shall not flinch," and he laughed shrilly as he bared his breast.

Zacchary seized the pistol, and his eyes

gleamed with the infernal anticipation of revenge, as he cocked it, and was proceeding to take deliberate aim at the heart of Edgar Ainslie. But ere he could pull the trigger, I had thrown up his arm, and the bullet whistled harmlessly through the air. When the smoke cleared away, Zacchary Burt was seen grasping the pistol by the muzzle, and raising his brawny arm to dash out the brains of his enemy, who calmly awaited his death without the movement of a muscle. The next instant the old minister stood by my side, between the infuriate Zacchary Burt and the kneeling Edgar Ainslie. "My son, my son, remember the words of the Book 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.'"

"Zacchary," I said gently, "you would not harm a helpless and repentant man; you would not act contrary to the wishes of Hester?" His lips quivered. "Well, then," I continued, as I took the pistol from his relaxing grasp, "Hester forgave Edgar Ainslie, and charged you to forgive him."

For the first time since Hester's death, Zacchary's tears were seen to flow. The two men, betrayer and betrayed, knelt side by side, peacefully at Hester's grave, while the voice of the good minister was uplifted in an extemporaneous prayer.



The morning was bright, as on my first visit. Long patches of alternate light and shadow diversified the beautiful and expanded landscape. Hardly a breath of air stirred the branches of the solemn and majestic pines; the bee hummed as it flew from flower to flower; the swallows skimmed the placid surface of the lake; in the distance is seen the winding of the silvery Hudson. Nature is so smiling, joyous and fair, that it is difficult to think of *Death*. Where then is the happy country maiden, who wakened the highland echoes with her merry laughter, as she ferried me over the lake on that memorable morning?

It seems but yesterday. I almost expect to see her canoe dart forth from the concealment of yonder headland. Cruel illusions of memory ! I am looking down upon a newly-sodded grave, and on one of the temporary staves planted at the head and foot, I read the rudely carved letters H.H. I was startled by the sound of my own voice ; unconsciously I had said aloud these words—“ *Hester Harding, I loved you !*”

CHAPTER XXI.

LUCY.

"I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too,
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food."

WORDSWORTH.

How is it that in looking back on the vista of the past, we so often find, it is not the woman or women we have loved, or spoken words of love to, who claim the deepest niche in memory. Is there a man of romantic temperament who cannot recall the souvenir of at least one accomplished woman, to whom he never whispered soft nothings; whose hand he never pressed in gallantry; whose ear he never ventured to abuse with artful flattery, lavished

on a host of others? Yet this woman will be remembered—yes, every little reminiscence connected with her will come back with the freshness of yesterday, while those who were once objects of passionate admiration, whom we desired to win at every sacrifice, are either utterly forgotten, or thought of without the slightest emotion.

May not a solution of this apparent paradox or phenomenon of the affections be found in this, that we loved such women with our minds rather than our hearts. Friendship, which is love without its wings, a sympathy of the intellect (our nobler part) bound us together—not that delicious, illusory, unreasoning, brief, delirious inebriation which we call *Love!*

“Love bears within its breast the very germ
Of change; and how should this be otherwise?
That violent things more quickly find a term,
Is shown through nature's whole analogies;
And how should the most fierce of all be firm?
Would you have endless lightnings in the skies!
Methinks Love's very title says enough:
How should the *tender* passion ere be *tough*!”

Better, I thought, an infatuation like that of Warner's, than to persist in robing idols of clay ; investing women of flesh and blood with attributes which have no existence, but in my own fancy. I will create an ideal mistress, who shall be to my lonely heart what Warner's imaginary picture was to his artistic ambition.

It must have been owing to my strict adherence to the determination never to love again, that I remained proof against all the charms of Lucy May. I have no need to invoke memory to draw her picture, for I have it before me. It occupies the principal place in my gallery of female portraits.

The picture, painted in E——'s best manner, represents a beautiful but diminutive young lady, mounted on a handsome bay mare. The light hand on the rein, the easy erect seat, shew her to be a skilful rider. The figure is exquisitely proportioned, and, though owing to the small stature, you might at the first glance, take her for a girl ; a closer examina-

tion of the intellect revealed in the features, and the roundness of the bust and arms would undeceive you.

The hair is a soft, silky brown, with a natural wave, swept off the face, with two or three coquettish little curls clinging to the temples. Her brow is full, especially at the sides, where phrenologists place ideality. The eye brows are just delicately indicated, as if formed by the finest symmetrical pencil-stroke, arching over eyes which are large and lozenge-shaped, with pupils of the clearest azure. Her nose is of the Cleopatra type, and might certainly be more classically shaped, but it would be impossible to find fault with the mouth beneath, the short, curving upper lip forming the veritable Cupid's bow, with the lower, and disclosing, when she smiled, two rows of pearly teeth. Her complexion is a creamy white, deepening into the most delicate rose tint in the cheeks. The colour is perhaps a little forced in the picture, even allowing for

the flush of exercise. E—— was fond of pushing his taste for colour to extremes.

Her brown hair is surmounted by a black beaver hat and veil, with a single black ostrich plume, and tied beneath the chin. A little to the right, is a large bow of broad pink riband. The boddice of her riding habit which is of dark green velvet, and displays advantageously the symmetry of her figure, has two rows of bell-shaped gold buttons, up the front. These are merely intended for ornament, the real fastenings being left partly open, so as to display the relief of the habit-shirt, surmounted by a plain collar, turned over a blue silk cravat.

She is sitting slightly forward in the saddle in an easy and graceful attitude, presenting a three-fourth view of the figure, and almost a full-front view of her comely intelligent face. Her left hand, which is gauntleted, is holding the reins, a silver-mounted riding whip, and her other glove. The right is patting the

arched and glossy neck of her steed. This has given the artist a fine opportunity of displaying his skill in painting the human hand, a trying test of artistic ability. The contour and colour are finely relieved against the hue of the horse. It is a diminutive, dimpled hand, a hand which looks as if it were intended to be gently pressed and kissed, and so fair and so finely finished that you can trace the delicate ramifications of the blue veins contrasting with the pink nails of the little taper fingers.

If my description has been rather that of a real person than a picture, it is because the illusion is so perfect, that you forget you are gazing on a canvas, and find yourself lost in speculations concerning the history and fate of the original. At the first glance you almost expect the rosy lips to smile—to hear her speak—to see her descend from her horse.*

Lucy May was the orphan daughter of a

* I wish Mr. Lovemall had told us how he obtained possession of this picture, of which he gives such a minute description.

half-pay officer, who had married a sister of Mrs. Penton. On the death of her parents, Lucy had left Montreal, and had come to reside with her aunt. She had a small independence of her own. Aunt and niece were mutually attached. But had their relations been entirely of an interested character, the obligation would have been conferred, not received by Lucy. She was the presiding genius, whose tact and winning ways conciliated all, and smoothed over every little misunderstanding between Mrs. Penton and her lodgers: every little domestic contre-temps which might otherwise have had prejudicial results. She was the life of the house. Her thorough amiability of character made her an universal favorite. Her pet-name, which I conferred upon her one day in joke, and which was true in more senses than one, was, "The Diamond Edition of Humanity." Her height was four feet six, but in this small compass it would have been difficult to find a more perfect face and figure. It is often said jocularly

“The best things are done up in the smallest parcels.” Nature may have restricted herself in material, but she certainly made due amends by the fineness of her workmanship.

I have given an elaborate picture of Lucy’s personal beauty. It is not so easy to convey a picture of her mental and moral loveliness. I can of course run off a catalogue of her accomplishments. She was a skilful musician. Her ear was excellent; too good perhaps, at least, she trusted to it too much, being accustomed to play the most difficult airs after one hearing, and being consequently rather averse to the labour of reading music. She was a clever amateur artist, and very fond of books. She had travelled and lived in London. She played chess. She danced gracefully, and was the best rider for a woman, I ever saw. All the boarders adored her, and I believe every young man who knew her, was in love with her—but myself.

Why did I not love Lucy? I, who could discern all her accomplishments and good

qualities. I, who was six feet, while she was four feet six ; I, who had such opportunities for cultivating her acquaintance. Ah ! that was just it. If the reasons I have already given, are not sufficient, perhaps this latter cause may explain. The very freedom of American Society, which permitted me to prosecute my acquaintance with Lucy, unchecked by any of these obstacles and restrictions, which crafty conventionalty enforces in England, where a man is expected to discern all the good qualities of the future wife of his bosom in an evening party, or a morning call ; where if you speak six times to the same lady, some brother, or mother, asks your intentions, always provided your pecuniary position makes it worth while ;* the fact that we lived in the same house and met each other

* Perhaps you'll have a letter from the mother,
To say her daughter's feelings are trepann'd :
Perhaps you'll have a visit from the brother,
All strut and stays, and whiskers to demand
What "your intentions are?" One way or other,
It seems the virgin's heart expects your hand,
And between pity for her case and yours,
You'll add to matrimony's list of cures.

daily, that there were no interruptions or difficulties placed in our way by stony-hearted parents, &c., &c., to prevent my falling in love if I chose; these, no doubt, were the reasons why I only cherished towards Lucy a platonic attachment, friendship, esteem; that I regarded her, in short, more in the light of a sister than anything else.

But perhaps it was owing to this relationship between us, that I learned more of Lucy's real character than if I had fallen deeply in love with her. There are many men who marry, knowing less of the characters of their wives, than I did of this woman whom I did not love. When we are in love, we begin to *crystallize* the loved object with a number of attributes, the generous gifts of

I've known a dozen weddings made even thus,
 And some of them high names: I have also known
 Young men—who—though they hated to discuss
 Pretensions which they never dreamed to have shown—
 Yet neither frightened by a female fuss,
 Nor by mustachios moved, were let alone,
 And lived as did the broken-hearted fair,
 In happier plight than if they formed a pair.

BYRON.

our own imagination, until the original being is no longer recognizable.

On looking back to this period of my life I see that I was much happier than I then thought myself to be. We had so many tastes and pursuits in common, we thought alike on so many subjects; no wonder, if, young as we both were, (Lucy was three years younger than myself) we availed ourselves of the privileges of boarding-house life to be much together. Without any concerted plan, we often breakfasted *tête-à-tête*, after the usual hour for that meal. Then, there were so many means of whiling away the sultry summer mornings. If it was too hot to go out riding, or walking, we read, or painted together, or I lay on a sofa while Lucy sang my favourite songs one after another. Often in memory I seem to hear that sweet voice now warbling the beautiful old songs, "The May Queen," or "Arize Zarifa," or "Kathleen Mavourneen," a long, long list, too numerous to pen. There are no such songs composed now-a-days!

I prized Lucy's good opinion. I was jealous of her liking any one better than me, and yet I could not feel that I loved her. No, although there is hardly a day in which I do not find her name entered in my journal, as follows :

May 17. Played chess with Miss May ; she plays so well that there is no occasion to husband my strength. 18th. The Spanish young lady, the Senhorita, as we called her, played on the piano, and Miss May played and sang a new song, beginning

“ Art thou in tears and yet thou'st been
The very gayest of the gay,
And have I lived to see thy smile,
In gush of anguish pass away.”

20. Went out riding with Miss May to-day. Got caught in a shower of rain, which obliged us to dismount at a road-side inn. Lucy pretended to be angry, and tried to look cross, because she said I didn't put her on her horse the proper way. I believe I took her bodily up in my arms. Made up going home.

She certainly looks charming on horseback, and has great presence of mind. We were both scampering along at a great pace, when, at an abrupt angle in the road, we met the mail. There was just room for one to pass. "Let me go first," cried Lucy; I obeyed, reined in, and she took the lead in fine style.

I find in my common-place book the following extract from Balzac, "The great majority of women who are skilful riders, are deficient in tenderness. Like the Amazons, *il leur manque une mamelle*, and their hearts are hardened in one place or another." Lucy is a signal exception to this general rule.

23rd. Bought Lucretia for Miss May. 25th. Went to the Exhibition with Miss May. 26th. In the afternoon walked with Miss May in Broadway.

27th. Took the Senhorita and Miss May to the Ethiopian Minstrels. Heard a pretty song, "We met by chance the usual way," which Miss May played and sung for the first time after we got home.

28th. Bought a ring with the word "Friendship" engraved on it, which Miss May was good enough to accept. In the afternoon began a sketch of Lucy.

29th. Sat and talked with Miss May while she worked. Poulticed her thumb, which she had hurt by running a needle in it. 30th. Saw Miss May with her hair in curls for the first time. Went out shopping with her and the Senhorita. Danced with Lucy in the evening.

Tell-tale Journal! Strange medley of human life. I find other names there mingled, which bring back many fair faces from the caverns of memory. Who could write his own life? As Bulwer truly says, we live six volumes in one day. I was young. I was in my "golden prime!" Every fair woman was to me an angel. I had brought introductions. I visited at many houses. But if I had not known a single soul, I had the privilege of walking in Broadway, which

at a certain hour is thronged with ladies, who combine the beauty of the American women, with the fascinating toilet of Paris. No wonder if with my large and susceptible heart, and with numerous engagements, and a vast correspondence conducted on scented note paper, I had not time to fall extensively in love even with Lucy May!

Let me mention here what struck me at first as an odd fashion. You meet numbers of ladies and gentlemen in Broadway, not walking as in Europe, arm in arm. The lady walks a little in front, and her elbow is held in the palm of the gentleman's left hand. This has the advantage of bringing the lady closer to the gentleman, and facilitating the progress through a crowded thoroughfare. It is exactly the old court style, in which ladies were handed by gallants into a barge or coach in the days of Elizabeth. It is not considered the etiquette for a lady to put her arm into that of a gentleman, unless they either are, or

going to be, married—blood relations of course excepted.

But the pleasant monotony of these entries in my journal, was interrupted by an event which shall be narrated in the next chapter.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

the fish market, and the fish market was the fish market.

THE OLD

"A strange fish!

"Hast thou f

OUR select company
XVI, had received
an *addition*, in a ce
old acquaintance of
giving a typical name
dal Damper, a
erhaps as fine
nuff
om
al h

THE LAST DAY

as effectually against the life

personal appearance

mental peculiarities

ing, holding

to seeds with

floral

eliminated

the individual

early took possession

away, and after nearly

claimed my good offices as

have long ago made the

have a heart as ten

my

I be

the

to

the

the

the

the

reiterated his opinions. If it were possible to get in some unpleasant truth, whether or not *apropos* to the subject, to say anything excessively personal and disagreeable to the feelings of another; if it were possible to introduce a sad and painful subject, Vandal Damper was the man to do these things, and thus richly to deserve his character of a moral extinguisher and wet-blanket in every society which had the happiness of possessing him!

All attempts to punish Mr. Damper, or humble him in his own estimation, by the severest repartee were futile. It is quite a mistake to suppose that the Pachydermata, or thick-skinned animals, are not represented by any creature higher than a quadruped. This vast genus which has its types in the sea, as well as on land, and even in the air, can claim, at least, a moral analogue in a very large family of human bipeds. Of these, Mr. Damper was a *fine specimen*. For him, the most pointed epigram possessed no sting. The keenest shafts of ridicule dropped harm-

less, as effectually blunted as the sting of a bee against the hide of a rhinoceros.

His personal appearance thoroughly endorsed his mental peculiarities. He was a great strapping, hulking fellow, who seemed to be running to seed ; with large feet, and fat hands, and a full florid face, whose vast expanse was seldom illuminated by the reflection of an idea.

Such was the individual who chased, grappled, and fairly took possession of me one day, in Broadway, and after nearly wringing my hand off, claimed my good offices as *friend* and compatriot.

My readers have long ago made the discovery, that I have a heart as tender as a woman's. When, therefore, I beheld this Damper, a poor lone cockney, three thousand miles from the sound of Bow Bells, my hatred and detestation were changed into a feeling of pity for the forlorn savage, and in an evil hour, I held out the right hand of fellowship. Bitterly did I afterwards repent this moment

of weakness, of which Damper immediately began to take advantage. Metaphysically I had become another Sinbad, with an old man of the sea clinging to my shoulders.

It almost turns my dangerous nature wild to reflect upon the mortal agony inflicted upon me, by Damper, for the space of a week, during which, with a noble fortitude and magnanimity, I did my duty, as bear-leader, and showed Vandal the lions of New York. No reader can enter into my sufferings, who has not practically known what it is to have a thoroughly uncongenial person utterly dependent on him for amusements in a large city. All those visits to sights, museums, picture-galleries, theatres, &c., &c., which are so delightful with a sympathising companion, become not simply wearisome, but have a refinement of torture, which beggars all description.

To read a fine poem, to gaze upon a beautiful landscape, or master-piece of art, to listen to a touching drama, or opera, in company with

one who remains unmoved and indifferent, where you (*if alone, or with a congenial spirit*), feel your nature aroused, sublimed, and etherealized,—is perhaps, the most bitter and exasperating trial of patience to which the intellect can be exposed.

To do my monster justice, he had *one* accomplishment, *one* refined taste, *one* redeeming point! He had a tolerable voice, and some skill in music. But alas! this was the very thing in which we could least sympathise. I am passionately fond of music, as I think all men of my taste and temperament, all artists, authors, and admirers of the fair sex are; but I lay claim to none of that critical appreciation, which marks the amateur. Music has this effect on me:—It sets me dreaming, building castles in the air, it vivifies both the memory and imagination, it transports me into another ideal and more beautiful world, it produces a ravishing delirium of the soul, in which I take little heed of persons or

things around me, and in which a false note might pass unobserved.

My gentle Caliban had gone to the Metropolitan Hotel for the sake of being near the Opera House. But finding the expenses rather dear, he asked me abruptly one day to introduce him to my boarding-house. I had been prepared for this request, and had been turning over in my mind the expediency of complying with it. I concluded to do so at length, from those mingled motives which are generally found at the bottom of every human action.

There was a vacancy at Mrs. Penton's, and it would only be a friendly act to get her another boarder. There were also the purely selfish considerations, that Damper being once introduced to a pleasant circle, would dispense his attentions over a larger number, and would therefore cease to be such an insufferable bore to me; likewise, his oddities would furnish a rich capital to Mr. Joyce, and considerably

enliven our prandial entertainments. Thus, I would have the satisfaction of turning the tables on my tormenter, and having my revenge, by making his eccentricities the medium of my amusement, as they had hitherto been of my affliction.

In neither of my expectations was I disappointed, though whether I had much cause to congratulate myself on the success of my manœuvres, the sequel will show. Pleased with his new associates, my old man of the sea began to relax the suffocating clasp of his legs round my neck, and, like Sinbad, I hoped soon to shake him bodily off altogether. To speak without metaphor, Damper, into whose nature no such feeling as gratitude ever intruded, began already to resent my fostering care of him in his unsophisticated state, or what he was pleased to consider my "patronizing manner;" and took every possible opportunity, by looks and words, to let me see that now he felt himself launched into society,

he had sufficient *savoir-vivre* to steer his bark alone.

I was in no mood to quarrel with him for his thanklessness. I did not quote to *him* Shakespeare's beautiful lines—

“ Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh,
As benefits forgot;
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp,
As friend remembered not.”

His change of manner was at first as agreeable as it was unexpected. I was only too happy to see the Damper inflicting himself on others, affecting the society of the ladies, and staying at home in the evenings to sing or tootle-tootle on his flute, instead of boring me to accompany him to the theatre or the billiard saloons.

But my anticipation of the rich harvest of amusement which he would afford, could not have been more thoroughly fulfilled. Mr. Joyce, in spite of his indefatigable fund of

spirits, had grown tired of quizzing Mr. Hobbie, and wished for somebody more worthy the trouble of hoaxing, than the credulous Mrs. Penton. To him, therefore, the arrival of Damper proved a welcome boon. He delighted at dinner, to bring up topics which called forth all Vandal's love of paradox and contradiction, and resulted in frequent jousts between him and myself; while Mr. Joyce, taking neither one side nor the other, would leave Damper under the firm belief that he seriously favoured his opinion. Under which impression, he would lavish such exquisite specimens of table-talk, as the following :

DAMPER (on Imagination).—"Bah, Genius! Imagination! I'm sick of the very words. What is the use of imagination? The man who indulges in imagination is injuring his mind. It is a sort of moral opium-eating or intoxication."

MR. JOYCE.—"Will you allow me to make a note of that extremely forcible and original remark, Mr. Damper?"

MYSELF.—“Still, Damper, you must admit that to this moral opium-eating we owe some great intellectual efforts. For example—‘The Iliad of Homer,’ ‘The Paradise Lost,’ of Milton, ‘The Plays of Shakespeare,’ the works of Byron, Shelley, Goethe, Schiller, and a host of similar trifles?”

DAMPER.—“Books! books! you’re always talking about books. What is the use of reading? What good does it do? What do we want to know about Cæsar?”

MYSELF.—“Why, you know you asked me to lend you Poe’s works the other day. Have you read ‘The Raven’?”

Mr. JOYCE.—“I shall be glad to hear Mr. Damper’s opinion of that strange poem.”

DAMPER.—“Me! I have no opinion at all about it. I’ve read it, and I can’t understand it. Oh, you may laugh”—(turning to me)—“perhaps you will be good enough to explain what it means.”

MYSELF.—“Damper, did you ever hear the anecdote of Turner’s reply to the critic, who

complained that he couldn't see such colors in nature as the painter represented. Probably not, sir, but don't you wish you could?"

DAMPER.—"No. And I don't see what that has to do with the question."

MR. JOYCE (very gravely).—"Your question, Mr. Damper, puts me in mind of a similar one made by a great mathematician, probably Archimedes, after reading Milton's *Paradise Lost*. What does it prove?"

Damper, who perceives neither the (intentional) anachronism, nor irony of Mr. Joyce's speech, plumes himself on being victorious.

He takes the earliest opportunity to tell me, in confidence, that he considers Joyce a very sensible man, with a well balanced mind. Mr. Joyce also communicates to me, in confidence, that he considers Damper "*an ass!*"

END OF VOL I.

THE COST OF A CORONET.
A ROMANCE OF MODERN LIFE,
IN THREE VOLUMES.

By J. McGRIGOR ALLAN,

Author of "The Intellectual Severance of Men and Women,"
"Young Ladyism," "Grins and Wrinkles," &c., &c., &c.

BRIEF EXTRACTS FROM REVIEWS.

The vividness of imagination, and freshness and originality of tone by which many of its pages are characterized, afford abundant evidence that Mr. Allan possesses some of the chief qualifications of a novelist, to a very considerable degree, which if properly directed, could not fail to raise him to a high position among the writers of fiction.—*The Literary Gazette*.

This book is decidedly better than that common-place nonentity of 900 pages, "a good average novel." For the hero we care little, &c.; but the Count is excellent, full of life and nonchalance, but all the time intent upon a deeply-laid scheme. There is, in fact, a dash of Louis Napoleon smeared across the handsome, the graceful, the gifted, the lamented Count D'Orsay. The young ladies of England, "lovely women," as they are collectively called, will have another book written about them, by Mr. Allan, unless they take his sensible advice, marry the "myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty," and the laurels also, if they be creeping near: marry them for love; but stick to orange-blossoms! Have nothing to do with strawberry leaves, accompanied by palsy, paralysis, and pecunia.—*Illustrated Times*.

"The Cost of a Coronet" has a great deal of clever writing in it, a bold, dashing style, and clever, cynical observations on men and manners.—*John Bull*.

The writer has unquestionable ability. He tells a story well, describes a scene well, and criticizes books and men well. His courage and ingenuity in announcing or insinuating his opinions, are great &c. The tone of the author is high. Jesus of Nazareth is his ideal of a man, and a true love, his notion of the highest possible moral force, &c. The moral, true or false, is, that, constituted as society is, the chances of going unscathed through life are heavy against women of brains, energy, and warm-heartedness—the great mass of regula-

tion-goodness, remaining with fools and malignants. Not a new idea, but very new to be painted in a three-volume novel, and illustrated by a series of scenes highly coloured and daring beyond what is common.—*The Queen*.

The writer undoubtedly possesses a certain degree of power. As a favorable specimen of his style, we give his opinion of his religious element in the Rev. Mr. Kingsley's novels.—*Weekly Dispatch*.

It is a tale of life—its struggles, vicissitudes, and adventures; and throughout its various phases, the writer paints with a masterly hand—not drawing his materials from books, but from the study of life itself. The character of Lester, in particular, is an embodiment that displays considerable ability in the handling; the other characters are also ably sketched and well contrasted, and the story will doubtless find especial favour with novel-readers.—*News of the World*.

The author has hit upon the happy idea of using the conversation of his fashionable characters as a vehicle for the expression of his own opinions upon Theology and Metaphysics. The author's heart is in his work, and his diction rises to the dignity of his subject.—*Saturday Review*.

If this is to be considered in the light of a melo-dramatic work, the author has no reason to be ashamed of it.—*The Athenæum*.

This is a romantic tale of modern life. Mr. Allan is already favourably known as the writer of several very popular stories, containing forcible descriptions of scenes and events of every-day occurrence. His latest production will certainly add to its author's reputation.—*Reynolds's Newspaper*.

The character of this work will be in some measure realized from its title. A large acquaintance with modern, fashionable and humbler life, in many of their phases, is abundantly manifested by the author; the characters, although strongly drawn—in some cases almost amounting to caricature, are striking, and generally speaking, natural; and the plot, although in itself somewhat complicated, is worked out so naturally, that its intricacies are lost sight of in the strong interest induced in pursuing its details. There is no sacrifice of consistency for the sake of what is termed "poetical justice," as the book concludes with the death of the heroine, and leaves the future of the hero to the reader's imagination; but, in addition to the very attractive nature of the plot, story, and incident, the author has not omitted to enforce a great moral, nor to inculcate, without undue prominence in a work of this kind, the due appreciation and influence of the true religious sentiment.—*Brighton Examiner*.

